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"NOW FOR SOME VILLAINY," MURMURED THE ALERT DODGER, WHILE HE
WATCHED THE PAIR.

OR,
THE RIVAL BOY DETECTIVES.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH,
AUTHOR OF "BUCKSKIN DETECTIVE," "TEXAS
TRUMP," "FELIX FOX," "PHIL FLASH,"
"CITY SLEUTHS," "BRANDED BEN,"
"DODGER DICK," "FOX AND
FALCON," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.
\$5,000 REWARD.

THE afternoon was warm and sunny for a fall day, and there seemed to be more than the usual bustle along the west-side wharves of New York.

In the shadow of a pyramid of boxes and bales a stout, good-looking boy was watching a lot of men at work a short distance away.

I will not attempt a personal description of the youth, for the reader of this library is already well acquainted with him, and I have only to say that we are dealing once more with Dodger Dick, the famous wharf-rat detective of Gotham.

While Dick was watching the lading of a vessel not far from his point of observation, the voice of a newsboy came shrill and clear from the street:

"Evening *Telegram*—third edition!" sung out the little fellow. "All about the fire and the robbery. Five thousand dollars reward!"

The last announcement seemed to have a magic effect.

"Hello! This way, Tony!" shouted Dick, at the same time signaling the newsboy with his hand.

"*Telegram*," Tony stopped, looked a moment, and then came forward at full speed.

"Fire and robbery, eh?" asked the wharf ferret, as he held out the exact change.

"That's what I'm giving you. It's no gag to sell papers, Dick, though I don't think the fire amounts to much," and once more, "Here's your *Evening Telegram*!" sounded on the wharf as Tony darted after an expected purchaser.

Dodger Dick unfolded the paper in the shadow of the goods.

He saw at once that the two events bore no relation to each other.

They were not in the same column, and had not occurred on the same street.

The boy turned instinctively to the robbery, and a moment later he was absorbed in the account, which in substance was something like this:

Norris Gibbs was a retired broker of —th street. He was reputed wealthy, and lived alone, with the exception of a young girl named Lucy Lukens, whose guardian he was. It seems that at five o'clock on the morning of the date of the paper, a young man, who sometimes slept in the house, entered the library and found Mr. Gibbs gagged and unconscious in a chair. It was some time, the account stated, before the broker was able to speak, and when he was sufficiently recovered to do so, he told a very thrilling story.

In brief, it was that at about eleven o'clock the previous night he was surprised at his desk by two men who wore black muslin masks, and that while one held a pistol at his head, the other secured him in the chair by an ingenious contrivance which they had brought along for that purpose.

Having accomplished this part of their work successfully, the rascals opened the private safe which happened at the moment to be unlocked and abstracted some funds and a lot of very important papers, some of which, the reporter hinted, affected his young ward's future.

Unable to move or cry out, Mr. Gibbs was compelled to occupy the chair, and at last, the strain on his nerves becoming too great, he fainted, in which condition he was found as already mentioned.

The account of the robbery wound up by saying that the broker was anxious to have the bold thieves hunted down, and that he had offered a reward of five thousand dollars for their apprehension and the return of the papers.

Dodger Dick did not miss a syllable of the story. When he reached the end he went back and read several portions of it the second time.

"I guess that reward has already attracted half the man-hunters of New York," he observed with a smile.

"Maybe it's hardly worth while for me to see what there's in it, but it isn't always the dog that heads the pack at the start that catches the fox. Besides, the brief description of the contrivance that held the broker to the chair whets my appetite for something more about this case. I'll make a move for that five thousand and anyhow."

Shortly after this Dodger Dick was on his way to the scene of the mysterious crime.

"Here! which way?" suddenly cried a man whose hand alighted on the boy's shoulder as he spoke.

Dick saw at his side a tall, broad-shouldered man with piercing black eyes and abundant whiskers. Near by stood another person, doubtless the big man's companion, but he was a pigmy compared to the other.

"What do you want?" asked the boy, sharply. "That's not the one, count," suddenly laughed the little man. "Don't you see you've stopped the wrong chappy?"

The big man drew back and looked at Dick.

"I see now!" he exclaimed.

"Well, by George! did you ever see anything

like it? Ha, ha! It beats my time all hollow." And without explanation or apology, he turned away and both men hurried off.

If the wharf shadow had not been on a mission of importance, he would have followed the men for the purpose of finding out who they were; but he started forward again, and soon after turned into the street inhabited by Norris Gibbs, the broker.

"That's the first time in a long while I've been taken for some one else," thought the boy. "Those two men were anxious to see the party whom they took me to be. Maybe they were waiting for him; it looked very much that way. A big man and a little one—Tom Thumb and Goliath. I'll not forget that."

Five minutes later the Dodger ran up the steps of the three story brick house occupied by Norris Gibbs, and jerked the knocker.

In a moment the door was opened, and he was asked by a rather good-looking young man what he wanted.

"I wonder if this isn't the fellow who found Mr. Gibbs in the chair?" mentally queried the young ferret, and then he answered the demand:

"I want to see Mr. Norris Gibbs."

"You do? Got a message for him?"

"No. I want to see him on important business."

The young man looked at Dick while a sneer formed at the corner of his mouth.

"If I thought a boy like you could have business with Mr. Gibbs just now—"

"Do you run this house?" flashed Dick, drawing his figure up and at the same time gliding across the threshold before he could be expelled.

"If Mr. Gibbs has placed you here to pass on his visitors and to turn out all whom you please, it is all right; but I don't believe he has done any such thing. My business with the gentleman of the house is strictly private."

The young man had colored, and his eyes had an angry look, but fearing, perhaps, to eject an important caller, so Dick thought at the time, he pointed to a door a short way down the hall.

"The responsibility of disturbing Mr. Gibbs rests on you," he snapped.

"I'll take it," was the response, and Dick walked eagerly toward the door.

The next minute he turned a knob and ushered himself into a room which he saw at once was the well-furnished library of a person of considerable wealth.

Instead of confronting one man as he expected to do, Dodger Dick found himself face to face with two.

An odor of fragrant cigar-smoke filled the room, and the boy perceived its occupants seated at a round table on which was a tray provided with bottles and glasses.

Both men looked astonished when the boy entered, and the face of one grew red with indignation.

Dick advanced, hat in hand, and bowed politely.

"Mr. Gibbs, I believe?" he said, addressing the oldest member of the pair, whom he concluded was the robbed broker.

"I'm Mr. Gibbs, but I don't see what's brought you back," was the tart reply.

Dick was almost thunderstruck.

"This is the boy who was here about noon," continued the broker, turning to his companion, a man some years younger than he, and the possessor of a smooth, peaked face indicative of a certain species of cunning. "One-half the gamins of New York will want to be detectives now. I shall be bothered with the vermin for some time to come, but I intend that I will not be imposed on. What is it now, sir?"

The last words were sharply spoken to the Dodger who saw that his arrival had thrown Norris Gibbs into very bad-humor.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I have not been here before."

"What! I don't want you to stand on my carpet and stretch the truth in that manner. You were here about noon; you sat in the chair occupied by Mr. Copeland there, and asked me about the affair of last night. I don't allow anybody to contradict me in my own house."

"There must be a mistake," replied Dick. "I never heard of the assault and robbery until half an hour ago, consequently I could not have been here at noon asking you about it."

"I am not to be hoodwinked. What do you advise me, Mr. Copeland?"

"To have nothing to do with so-called boy detectives," answered the peaked face man, and Dick thought he took great pleasure in delivering this opinion.

"Deuced good advice, and just the kind that suits me!" cried Gibbs. "Mr. Copeland is my lawyer," he went on, addressing the Dodger;

"and he knows exactly what he is talking about. You have come back here for some purpose, and I don't care to know what it is. I have placed my case in the hands of the best detectives in New York, and I won't be bothered by boys, nor will I give them a particle of information. That is all, sir. You know the way to the street, I guess."

Dodger Dick could hardly keep his indignation down.

The broker's last words were a peremptory dismissal, and the lad saw that any further attempts to explain would not be allowed.

"You are very positive," he said, looking at Mr. Gibbs from the door. "I stand before you for the first time, notwithstanding your assertion that I was here at noon. You have offered five thousand dollars reward for the robbers and your papers. You may have to pay it to one of those very gamin detectives you laugh at, Mr. Gibbs. Good-morning!" And Dick was gone in a second.

He heard the laugh of two men behind him, and then he was on the street.

"The second time!" cried the boy. "Can it be that I have a double who is playing ferret in this case? That there is some person who resembles me I know, for the giant mistook me for that person on the street, and Norris Gibbs has been visited by my counterpart. Here is a mystery from the start. I see it is a race for the five thousand dollars!" And Dick laughed as he moved off.

CHAPTER II.

AN UNWILLING WITNESS.

THE mysterious robbery, full accounts of which got into all the city papers, brought Norris Gibbs a good deal of notoriety.

He had been known as a pretty successful broker, and there were those who said that he was up to all the tricks of the trade.

At any rate, he had accumulated a considerable amount of worldly goods, and his bank account was thought to be prodigious.

As has been stated already, he was "retired" at the time of the robbery, had few visitors outside of his attorney, Chubb Copeland, who came pretty often and sometimes remained a long time.

Of course the five-thousand-dollar reward stimulated search for the robbers, and for several days Mr. Gibbs was kept busy giving an account of the affair to amateur and professional detectives.

He intended to run the two rascals down if it cost him half his wealth, and he declared, with emphasis, that there should be no proceedings looking to a compromise of any sort.

The lawyer professed to know but little about the nature of the valuable papers carried away by the robbers.

He went so far as to say, however, that he believed they in some manner affected Miss Lukens, the broker's ward, but just how he did not know.

Chubb Copeland was a shrewd man in a certain sense. He practiced sometimes in the police court, and was always on the lookout for technical points by which he could worm his clients out of the clutches of the law.

He was passably good looking despite his peaked face, was about thirty, and had a gliding gait which gave one an insight to his nature.

Nobody knew how he came to be Norris Gibbs's legal adviser, and nobody cared, but, somehow or other, there seemed a strange bond of union between the two men.

It was the third evening after Dodger Dick's call at the broker's house in search of information which, as we know, he did not get.

Chubb Copeland was seated in his little office on the second floor of a building not far from Union Square.

It was a very small office, but plenty large enough for the lawyer and his business. The windows commanded a view of the famous Square where the leaves were turning brown under the frosts of early autumn.

The lawyer loved to sit at one of the windows, and people were ungenerous to say that he sat there watching for clients, like a spider at the door of his den.

On this particular evening the lawyer was occupying his chair at his accustomed window.

He had no clients.

All at once he heard footsteps in the hall that lay just beyond the door at his back, and as he turned his head to see whether fortune was bringing any fish to his net, he was confronted by a man who came in without the slightest invitation.

Copeland's visitor was an immense man physically, and the lawyer could not help noting the

contrast between them as the man came forward.

"Mr. Chubb Copeland, attorney-at-law, I believe?" began the giant, dropping into a chair that seemed to give under his weight.

"Yes, sir."

"My name is Foxcraft."

"Of the city?"

"Of New York."

"Well, Mr. Foxcraft, what can I do for you this evening?"

"A good deal, perhaps," smiled the lawyer's visitor. "I understand you are Mr. Norris Gibbs's legal adviser."

Copeland started just a little.

"I have served the gentleman named at different times," he replied carefully.

"Just so. He has been unfortunate of late."

"If you refer to the robbery, which is the talk of the town, quite so."

"It was a cool proceeding. I never heard anything like it. No wealthy man is safe with men of that stripe abroad. What have the police done?"

"Nothing."

The lawyer's caller burst into a light laugh.

"And they will do nothing," he exclaimed.

"But I did not come to exchange such words as these with you, Mr. Copeland. While my business may be, in a certain way, connected with the Gibbs affair, it does not demand an expression of opinion concerning the robber's mode of operations. I am told that among the papers taken by the masked thieves were several which Mr. Gibbs was keeping in trust."

"That is true," answered Copeland giving Foxcraft a look full of wonderment.

"Miss Lukens who is Mr. Gibbs's ward was to receive several documents on her eighteenth birthday, was she not?"

"Do you understand this to be the case?" asked the lawyer.

Foxcraft's eyes seemed to get a mischievous twinkle.

He met the lawyer with a sword as keen as his own.

"Do I understand that you refuse to answer me, Mr. Copeland?" he asked coolly.

"As Mr. Gibbs' attorney, I cannot answer questions which I deem improper."

"Fudge!" laughed Foxcraft, but the very sound of the laugh sent a thrill to the lawyer's heart. "I ask no question that I think I am not entitled to have answered properly."

"Are you a detective?"

"Do I look like one?" And the big man in the chair in front of the lawyer leaned forward and looked straight at Copeland. "See here, Chubb Copeland; men call you cunning in law and all that. You have a certain notoriety which I wouldn't take from you for the world if I had to wear it myself. You need not sit there and try to steer me from my point by evasions or questions. I want straight answers. Some of those papers that left the broker's safe the other night were coming to Lucy Lukens, his ward, weren't they?"

"We will say yes."

The reply made the giant inquisitor smile.

"Very well," said he. "On her eighteenth birthday, which will occur within a few weeks, her guardian was expected to give them up."

"I believe so."

The lawyer's dogged tones told that he was answering under protest, and Foxcraft seemed to take secret delight in forcing the replies from him.

"What was the nature of those documents?" continued the big man.

"The envelope containing them was kept sealed."

"Oho! Sealed with wax, hey?"

"I think so."

"Did Lucy know of their existence in the broker's hands?"

"I presume so."

"I don't want any presumption," and the broad hand of the speaker dropped not very lightly on the table within a few inches of the lawyer's elbow.

"Well, I guess she knew they were there."

"And the nature of them?"

"They were sealed up, you know?"

Foxcraft bowed.

"When did Gibbs get those papers?"

"I don't know."

The reply came promptly as if the lawyer had expected the question.

"How did he get them?"

"You stump me again."

"I'm good at conundrums ain't I, Copeland?"

There was no reply to this sally.

"You're the first lawyer who doesn't know all his client's secrets. You have been Norris

Gibbs's legal adviser for years, but you don't know how he came by a lot of papers which are valuable enough for him to offer five thousand dollars for their return."

"He lost more than those papers. You overlook a very important fact."

"Do I? Thanks, Mr. Copeland."

There was mock gratitude in every syllable of the last sentence.

"So," he went on, "you don't know how those papers came to fall into the broker's hand? Didn't he receive certain valuable documents in trust the day Lucy's father died?"

"I cannot tell you."

Foxcraft leaned back in his chair and looked across the table at the city lawyer.

"Well, I don't intend to pry your jaws apart," he exclaimed. "You can retire as deep into your den as you please, Mr. Chubb Copeland. I am neither detective, nor a relative of Lucy Lukens. I dropped in to find out a few things, you know. I guess I've had pretty good success, despite your tartness and assumed ignorance."

These were pretty harsh words for the lawyer to swallow in his own office, but one look at the Goliath who filled the chair told him that policy demanded that they be taken down without cavil.

Therefore Copeland remained as meek as a lamb, only hoping that the unwelcome visitor would get away as soon as possible.

"I didn't intend to render you speechless," suddenly laughed Foxcraft. "You'll find your tongue again before I'm out of the building. Those papers are going to be restored to Lucy Lukens, or somebody will know why they are not. As I have told you, that robbery was a cool affair, and New York isn't done talking about it. Mr. Gibbs has given the city sleuths some spicy employment, and they seem to have their hands full, too. You can go back to your window now and watch the Square for clients. There's no money in Ferdinand Foxcraft tonight. You haven't given any legal advice, and I have none to pay for. So we quit even. Aha! good-night, Mr. Copeland."

The lawyer was too amazed to respond, and when he did find his tongue and burst out into a torrent of indignation, his visitor was quitting the building.

"In fortune's name, who is that city Satan?" cried Copeland. "By Jupiter! his visit means something."

He jumped up, grabbed his hat and rushed out.

Meantime Foxcraft had reached the street, where he had been met by a small, heavy-set man who seemed to boil over with eagerness.

"What did you learn? I'm dying to hear," asked the little man, clutching the giant's sleeve.

"Not here. The street has a thousand ears. Come along!"

Then the two hurried away, followed by a boy who looked very much like Dodger Dick.

CHAPTER III.

IN A NICE FIX.

"Now for a little work," thought the boy at the two men's heels. "I have been anxious to pick those fellows up ever since the big one stopped me on the way to the broker's house. Mr. Norris Gibbs's refusal to tell me anything about the robbery has kept me back a little; but, I reckon I haven't done so badly, after all. Which way are you going to take me, gentlemen? Ah, I see! Across the square, and then down-town."

It was, indeed, Dodger Dick's first sight of the two men since his adventure with them as detailed in our first chapter, and that occurrence was still so fresh in the young spotter's mind that he was resolved to find out something about the pair.

Nor was this Dick's only motive. He believed he had discovered that the giant and his dwarfish companion were, in some manner connected with the Gibbs case, and this was quite enough to put him on their track at first sight.

He could only wonder what could have taken the big man to the lawyer's office, for he knew that the broker's cunning attorney occupied a room in the building that rose above the park trees.

If he had stolen up-stairs, which he might not have been able to do unmolested, for the stout little man had been left on guard, some singular conversation might have rewarded him, but, as it was, he could only conjecture and resolve anew to get to the bottom of the mystery.

There were just people enough on the streets to render Dodger Dick's espionage an easy matter, and he had no difficulty in keeping the couple in sight.

He could not get near enough to hear what was passing between the two men, but as the larger one did the talking, Dick naturally supposed that he was detailing his visit to Chubb Copeland.

The big man was doing nothing less.

"So Lucy was to have the papers at a certain time?" exclaimed the little man, his deep-set brown eyes agleam with excitement.

"Yes, at her eighteenth birthday."

"Which will be here soon."

"The twelfth of next month."

"He went so far with you and no further, count. Couldn't you have choked the remainder out of him?"

"I did not want to carry things too far, Noxie."

"No, of course not; but I think I would have made him confess how the broker first got the papers."

"Don't we know?" and Foxcraft sent a frown down to his friend. "When I asked him if Lucy's father did not give those papers to Gibbs the day he died, the lawyer made a denial which I knew was all put on. I never heard of a more opportune robbery. It happened in time to relieve the broker of some very undesirable property."

"But he offers five thousand dollars for the robbers and their plunder. I don't understand that."

"You don't, eh? Then I advise you to go back and consult the lawyer I have just interviewed."

The little man knit his brows.

"I believe I could succeed better than you have done," he growled, although he smiled as he spoke as if to soften the asperity of his remarks. "We've got to track the thieves down, count; that is all."

There was no reply by the city Hercules, and the following moment the two men turned into another street and increased their gait.

Followed still by the wharf detective, who was determined not to lose sight of them, they headed a tolerably long chase which ended at last on the Bowery where they darted into one of the numerous open doorways on that thoroughfare, and disappeared.

"Their nest for a thousand!" exclaimed Dick who knew the character of the houses in that vicinity. "When I want to know something about you fellows I know where to come for information. Talk over your plans to your satisfaction, the Dodger won't disturb you," and with another look at the house to mark it well, the young shadow darted away and quickly disappeared.

He started back to Union Square, and almost ran, as if eager to get there within a given time.

It was now no longer evening but night, and Dick saw the numerous lights that shone among the trees.

He was soon on the sidewalk under the lawyer's windows, and a glance upward showed them to be dark and uninviting.

After a little while the boy glided into the main open hallway and slipped up-stairs.

The first landing was nearly dark.

There were a number of offices along the corridor that ran from the steps the whole length of the building, but the young detective had no difficulty in locating Lawyer Copeland's quarters.

Of course Dick found the door locked when he turned the knob.

The lawyer was not in the habit of leaving his door unsecured when he was out.

"I came here to see the inside of Chubb Copeland's room, and I am not going to be baffled," muttered the boy, and then he took the best survey he could get of the transom overhead.

"I guess I can get through there," he continued, smiling. "More than once have I crept through places that would have tried a weasel. If you have an immovable transom, Chubb, you have barred me out; otherwise I will become an unwelcome visitor."

It was no trick at all for the agile boy to draw his body to the top of the door, and, in a little time he was working himself into the lawyer's office between the transom and its frame.

What an admirable catch it would have been for the lawyer if he could have appeared at the scene at this moment; but fortunately for Dodger Dick, he did not come to put a sudden end to his adventure.

It did not take the boy long to get through the transom, and he let slip an exclamation of relief as he dropped noiselessly to the floor in the office.

A little light came up from the lamps on the sidewalk beneath the windows, but it was not

sufficient for Dick's purposes, although it showed him some of the furniture of the room.

Although, as we have seen, Chubb Copeland rushed from the office after Foxcraft's departure, he was careful enough not to leave anything important lying around.

Dick found a few papers on the table, but a glance showed him that they were worth nothing to him, and he turned away for larger game.

"Can it be that I am to find nothing important?" thought the boy.

"Mr. Copeland's safe happens to be a combination affair, and as he has not been obliging enough to leave the combination behind, I will not have the pleasure of looking beyond its doors."

Just at this moment the young detective heard footsteps and then voices. They were in the hall, and not far from the lawyer's door!

"The big fellow was insulting," said one of the voices, and the tones thrilled the breathless boy. "He tried finally to carry things with a high hand, but I reckon he found me firm enough for him. Let me see. What has become of my key, anyway?"

No wonder the Dodger stood spellbound.

One of the men outside was Chubb Copeland himself. He could guess who was his companion.

Not a moment was to be lost. Escape was impossible. Dick had imprisoned himself, and it seemed for a few seconds that he was about to be caught in a bad position by the very men he wished to avoid at that time.

In one corner of the room stood an old lounge, which the old lawyer had either taken as pay from a client, or had purchased at a second-hand furniture sale.

It did not offer much of an asylum to the hard-pressed boy, but it was that or discovery, so the Dodger sprang forward and quickly squeezed himself under the lounge, where he was forced to occupy a position that threatened to cripple him for life.

He had scarcely fixed himself as best he could, ere a key clicked in the lock and the opening door admitted two men.

Copeland locked the door behind them, then lowered the curtains of the windows and turned on the gas.

Dick heard chairs moved up to the oval table that stood in the middle of the room, and when he dared to catch a glimpse of the scene he discovered two men, Chubb Copeland, the lawyer, and Norris Gibbs, the broker.

"Now for some villainy," murmured the alert Dodger, while he watched the pair. "If the bond between you two fellows isn't stronger than that which usually exists between lawyer and client, I miss my guess."

Then he drew his head back lest his eyes should attract attention by their brightness, and listened.

"Tell me now," said Norris Gibbs in eager voice, and he leaned across the table while he spoke. "Do you think the man, Foxcraft, suspects?"

"No; he was merely playing a bluff game," was the prompt reply.

"But he knew something about the papers?"

"He only pretended to. Didn't he say that the robbery was the coolest one he ever heard of, and right on top o' that intimate that it would always remain a mystery to everybody in New York, the sleuths included? I'm glad I didn't have to go to your house to-night in search of you, for I might have been watched."

"By whom?"

"By that boy who called twice on you the day after the affair."

"Is he going to be troublesome?"

"Not long if I lay hands on him, and I think I will in a short time."

"In whose employ is the young street weasel?"

"Not in our friend's, you may depend on that," and the Dodger heard the lawyer laugh.

"But what does the girl say now, Gibbs?"

"She seems to be of the same mind."

"Ho! Don't you think she is encouraged?"

"By whom?"

"By the young man whom she used to meet in the park."

"By that rascal!" cried the broker. "If I thought so, Copeland, I'd read her a lesson in discipline she would never forget. But you don't want to get discouraged. Girls are girls, you know, and I know how to discipline one like Lucy. You carry out your part of the bargain and I'll stand by mine."

"Agreed! The detectives are still looking after that five thousand—the fools!"

"Let them look," laughed the ex-broker, and the lawyer joined him in his merriment.

Then Copeland went to a secret sideboard in the wall and took out a bottle and a pair of glasses.

Dick watched the proceedings that followed with a good deal of impatience.

The two men grew hilarious before they separated, and then, to his dismay, he discovered that the lawyer was going to pass the night in the office!

"I'm in a nice trap sure enough," murmured the young sleuth. "I got a good deal of valuable information by coming here, but if I don't soon get out of this terrible place, I'll never be able to put it to use. This is the most trying situation of my life."

CHAPTER IV.

GETTING OUT.

It was some time before Chubb Copeland concluded to go to bed.

He took some papers from the safe and went over them at the table.

Now and then he would break out into chucklings of triumph and delight which came clearly to the Dodger's ears, but the boy of course could not tell the nature of the documents.

"If he would only forget to lock the safe what a service he'd be doing me!" thought the boy sleuth. "But of course a shrewd rascal like Copeland will do nothing of the kind."

And he did not, for, when he got through with the papers, he shut up the safe with more than ordinary care, and began to make preparations for bed.

"When they catch a fox they'll know it!" exclaimed the lawyer.

"I haven't lived my thirty odd years with my eyes shut, nor with my ears stopped. The man Foxcraft didn't make anything off o' me; I guess he has a higher opinion of Chubb Copeland's cunning than he entertained before the interview. Ho, ho, Mr. Foxcraft; when you pump me dry you'll know it. By Jove! you will."

All at once the Union Square lawyer plumped down upon the lounge, and Dodger Dick thought for a second that he was going to be crushed.

He was tightly wedged between the boards of the lounge and the floor, and if the lawyer had been a large man like Foxcraft, there would have been a catastrophe serious in its results to the daring spy.

Dick had now to endure the torture until Copeland should fall asleep.

The minutes seemed hours while he waited.

The lawyer was not very drowsy. He lay awake more than an hour mumbling over various plans for the future, and Dick all the while wishing that sleep would take speedy possession of him.

At last sundry snores not at all musical told the young sleuth that the lawyer had succumbed.

He held back as long as he could, and at last, when he began to wriggle out of the uncomfortable position, it was with a great many misgivings.

The boy detective felt sore in every limb.

If he had been tortured in a huge letter-press he would not have had more aches and pains.

There was nothing in the place for him at that time. He was still in danger, for, should the lawyer awake and discover him, a disastrous struggle might ensue.

Dick's aim was to get out of the office as quickly as possible.

The transom was at his service, but he was loth to try it now for fear that it might fail him.

The door was the better exit, and as he knew that Copeland had left the key in the lock after fixing the inside catch, he resolved to take advantage of that avenue to freedom.

He bade the lawyer a mental good-night as he glided across the room and softly turned the key.

Fortunately there was no ominous click, and, the catch performing its service in the same noiseless way, he was soon in the hall, better luck than he expected.

The Dodger shut the door carefully behind him, and stole down to the street.

"I thought they don't get ahead of the fox, Mr. Copeland," he laughed, looking up at the windows of the lawyer's office. "My advice to you is 'always look under the bed before you retire.' So Norris Gibbs is going to carry out his part of the agreement, if you stand by yours? We will see what that agreement is and then—well, time enough after that to see whether it is kept by both parties."

Meantime the lawyer slept on, unconscious of the event that had occurred since his retirement.

All at once he opened his eyes like a person roused by a sound.

"Where am I? Oh, yes, in the office," he cried. "Gibbs was here to-night and went away. Where does that draught of air come from? By Jupiter! the door is open!"

It did not take the lawyer a second to spring from his couch and reach the door.

Sure enough, it was open several inches, and when he leaned out and listened with his heart in his throat he thought he caught the sound of flying footsteps.

"I certainly locked that door when I turned in," he muttered, locking it for certain, this time, ere he turned away.

"It can't be that somebody has been here. No; I'm too light a sleeper for that."

He was not satisfied until he had turned on the gas and inspected the room.

A glance at his watch told him that it was well past midnight.

Beyond the window the great Square was silent and deserted, and the whole city seemed asleep—the whole city but himself.

Chubb Copeland resolved not to go back to bed again. In a short time it would be morning, and, for reasons best known to himself, he wanted a whole day before him.

While he looked down into the park from the window he saw a figure leave one of the benches and come to the curb.

"That's a spy!" cried Copeland, as the man stopped and looked up at the building that contained his quarters. "He is looking straight up at my windows now, and he means mischief. He hasn't been lying on that bench for nothing, and then this is the hour when people are supposed to sleep soundest, and when the burglar gets in his work. Well, I've got something worth taking, and the rascal down there probably knows it."

Alarmed by the presence of the figure at the edge of the sidewalk, the lawyer was about to step back to arm himself when he saw the man joined by a boy, and both went back under the trees.

"That's the young ferret I want to catch," thought Copeland. "He is the inquisitive chap who called on Mr. Gibbs twice the day after the mystery, and I promised Norris last night that I would nab him in a short time. So he and a man are companions? Ha! I am getting on a thing or two without exerting myself very much. The fellow down there hardly looks large enough for Foxcraft, but I am above him, and that is deceiving."

He did not doubt that the man and the boy had withdrawn to one of the numerous benches in the park for consultation although he could not see them, and he watched eagerly for their reappearance.

"Maybe they've given it up," remarked the lawyer, at last. "I am not to be molested—not now, at any rate. Well, I know that I've got to play fast. Won't I throw a startling card before the day is over?"

He did not quit the window till a new day broke over New York, and the streets began to throb with the pulsations of traffic.

Secretly Chubb Copeland was very glad that the figures in the park had come no nearer than the curb. He did not court a meeting with any man, especially not with one who might be Ferdinand Foxcraft, the City Hercules.

By and by he went out and took a turn through the square.

This was of course a reconnaissance, and it was one, too, which pleased the lawyer and prepared him for a hearty breakfast.

No traces of man nor boy were discovered, though he looked well for such.

"I'll now get ready for the catch I'm going to make to-day. I'm one of those people who clear the way as they go. It stands me in hand to do this, and I intend to make no mistake."

The lawyer spoke thus in audible tones as he stooped in front of his safe after his return to his little office from breakfast.

He began at once to manipulate the combination, but all at once every vestige of color left his face, and he fell back with a cry of horror.

"Merciful fortune! it can't be that some one has been here!" he gasped. "The combination doesn't produce the usual results. Have—I—been—robbed?"

Chubb Copeland looked the very picture of despair while he gasped for breath in front of his treasury.

Great drops of perspiration came out on his forehead and settled there.

After awhile he again attacked the safe with mingled energy and persistence.

It was not possible that he had been robbed!

In the midst of his work he was conscious

that the door had been opened; still he did not look around for a moment.

Then a footstep on the floor sounded clearly, and Copeland looked up.

For a second the lawyer could not believe his eyes.

A well-dressed young girl stood before him.

Her face was fresh and beautiful, and the New York law-sharp could not help noticing the grace of her figure.

"Ah! good-morning, Miss Lucy," he stammered. "You do me the honor of a very early visit. My safe is inclined to be troublesome—"

"So I see," smiled the girl, who was Norris Gibbs's ward, and the last person the lawyer expected to see in his office. "My visit is somewhat early, but I think its importance will be excuse enough for it. I am in no great hurry, if you desire to get into your safe very soon."

The coolness of the girl perplexed and amazed Chubb Copeland.

"In fortune's name, what can have occurred to fetch Lucy Lukens to my office?" he asked himself. "It can't be that the girl dreams—No! that is not possible!" And then he left the safe for his visitor.

"I'm in no hurry," resumed he, taking a chair opposite the one occupied by the broker's ward. "I believe you just intimated that important business makes you my caller. Am I to have you for a client, Miss Lucy?"

"I think not. I only want to ask a question. What makes Mr. Gibbs maintain that the robbery took place at eleven o'clock, when I know he wasn't in the library until after twelve?"

Chubb Copeland turned all sorts of colors before the positive young girl.

Here was a thunderbolt for which he had not been looking, and Lucy Lukens had dropped it with very little warning.

He tried to collect his thoughts on the spur of the moment, but could not.

"I—I really cannot say. Does Mr. Gibbs say so?" he replied.

"You ought to know what he says, Mr. Copeland; you are his lawyer," she suggested, with a provoking smile.

"Yes, he sticks to it that the robbery took place at eleven. The library clock stands before his chair and he could see it all the time," she finished.

"Have you mentioned this to him?" asked the lawyer, recovering a little.

"No. You may do so if you wish. I have left Mr. Gibbs's house for good."

"What! you go away before his guardianship expires?" cried Copeland.

"Pardon me, but I am free. I have undoubted proofs of the fact that I was eighteen three days ago, and I prefer to live no longer on—th street."

This was bombshell number two, but the lawyer met it by walking across the room and coolly locking the door in Lucy's face.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOUBLE ON THE SCENT.

"WHAT does that mean?" asked the girl, with rising indignation as Copeland came back and resumed his seat.

His manner was, to say the least, provoking. If Lucy had any doubts before that Norris Gibbs's legal adviser was a cool or a dangerous man, she had none now.

"It means that I do not want to be interrupted while I talk with you," answered the lawyer, bestowing a peculiar smile upon his visitor. "The fact is, we office people are so frequently interrupted of mornings that the thing has become a nuisance. Don't you think your last step one of poor policy?"

"I cannot look at it in that light."

"Mr. Gibbs has been good to you."

"But I am eighteen, and my own mistress."

"That might be disputed, Lucy."

"By Norris Gibbs?" exclaimed the young girl, smiling.

"Yes, and by others."

"I shall meet the issue fully armed if it comes," was the rejoinder. "I thought with some other people that I would not be of legal age until the twelfth of next month, but a certain discovery proves otherwise."

Copeland, the lawyer, was silent for a moment. By what means had Lucy Lukens discovered that the broker had no right to longer exercise the authority of a guardian over her?

"Who has helped the girl to this piece of news?" he mentally exclaimed. "She cannot have found out without help. Has the young fellow whom she has been seeing in the park worked this mischief?"

Then he addressed Lucy again.

"It is a bold step, and one you may always

regret," he remarked. "It is not too late to retrace your steps, and I infer that Mr. Gibbs as yet knows nothing of your determination."

"It is too late!" and Lucy spoke with a certain emphasis which the lawyer could not avoid catching. "But to go back to my question, Mr. Copeland. Why does Mr. Gibbs stick to the hour of eleven as the precise time of the robbery?"

The lawyer had to answer that he did not know, and then he remarked that the ex-broker in his excitement may have mistaken the right time.

Something very like a sparkle of derision appeared in the depths of Lucy's lustrous eyes, and the keen lawyer saw that she treated his suggestion with contempt.

"I admit that he may have been excited, but he persists that he was wonderfully cool, and in proof of this he has detailed to minuteness the operations of the two plunderers. One hardly knows how to take him. It is all very strange to me."

"Confound the girl! She doesn't intend to be convinced. She will give somebody trouble if she airs her opinions wherever she goes."

"Where do you intend going, Miss Lucy?" asked Copeland. "Of course you have not moved without preparation."

"I have friends who will welcome me," was the reply.

"But, you will not keep us in ignorance of your whereabouts? As your guardian, Mr. Gibbs will have a certain settlement to make, and you must be a party to the proceedings."

"I will let you have my address when it is needed," responded Lucy.

At this moment there were footsteps in the corridor, and Lucy and the lawyer heard them stop at the door.

"The letter-carrier," thought Copeland, and then he heard a rap which took him across the room.

The person at the door was a boy with a note, and as the lawyer took it, Lucy left her chair and came forward.

"Are you going, Miss Lucy?" asked the lawyer.

"I am going," answered the girl firmly. "You can inform Mr. Gibbs that I have left his house, and, if you like, you may say in partial explanation that I may explain in the near future. I am convinced that I am legally my own mistress, notwithstanding his assertion, or this step would not have been taken."

Chubb Copeland stood between Lucy and the door, and he had it in his mind for a moment to detain her, but instead, he put on as pleasing a face as he could and opened the portal.

"I trust you will take another view of this matter," said he. "Of course you know that Mr. Gibbs put out the large reward for the purpose of securing the return of certain papers of interest to you."

"So he says," smiled Lucy. "If they are found I will know it. Well, good-morning, Mr. Copeland."

The New York lawyer could hardly believe for several seconds that the girl had slipped through his fingers.

"By Jove; this is something unlooked for—a shot from a masked battery, as it were," burst from him. "Can't I see her lover's hand in the whole affair? Left Norris Gibbs, has she? Found out she is eighteen. I wonder where she got onto that piece of information? Well, we'll find her. I'd like to see a girl as valuable as she is to us hide long in New York, big as it is."

Then he suddenly thought of the folded message the boy had just delivered, and opened it.

The following moment a cry burst from the lawyer, for the paper was from the broker, and at a glance he had read it:

"MY DEAR COPE:—Lucy has left with a certain paper that it is not to our interest for her to have. If you see her, for Heaven's sake detain her at all hazard. This is very important. The girl at large with what she knows is absolutely dangerous."

"GIBBS."

"Why didn't I open this before I let her out?" cried the lawyer, indignant at his own proceeding. "The next time—pshaw! the next time may never come. I ought to be kicked to the Battery for my stupidity," and he tore the message into fifty pieces, and tossed the whole into a waste-basket.

Within the next two minutes the enraged lawyer rushed from the office and appeared on the street in a state of excitement.

If he was looking for Lucy Lukens he looked in vain, for the girl had vanished, and he again cursed his "stupidity," a pretty good word for the occasion.

All at once the law-sharp turned and hurried off, followed, though he knew it not, by a nimble-footed boy whose evident intention was to keep him in sight.

Chubb Copeland went almost direct to Norris Gibbs's house, and bursting into the library without ceremony, he drew an exclamation of joy from the man, who appeared to be waiting for some one.

"You got my message, eh?" exclaimed the ex-broker.

"I did."

"Wasn't it a thunderbolt?"

"Not very much of one. Lucy had just left my office," grinned the lawyer.

"The—Old Harry!" cried Gibbs. "What was her object in visiting you?"

"She propounded a strange question."

"Well?"

"She wanted to know why you persist in saying that you were robbed at eleven o'clock."

Norris Gibbs laughed, but his merriment was assumed.

"I don't see anything in that," he observed. "But she says that she knows you weren't in this room that night till after twelve."

The New York broker started at the finish.

"Does the girl say that?" he cried.

"Yes."

"What do you say?"

Copeland shook his head.

"I really cannot tell," he answered.

"Is Lucy positive?"

"Very positive."

Gibbs looked at the clock ticking on the mantle.

"I wonder if it could have been the time she says it was?" he continued. "I told you in my message that the girl at large was dangerous, but I did not refer to anything of this kind. Did she tell you that she had discovered she was eighteen?"

"She did."

"But she did not inform you how the discovery was effected?"

"No."

"Well, the girl played burglar," and Gibbs leaned toward Copeland, and grew white while he spoke. "There was only one avenue open to a discovery of this sort, and she sought it out. Yes, sir, Lucy Lukens visited this room last night, and found a paper which proves her own mistress from this time on. When I found a note on my table this morning, saying that she had gone out, a terrible suspicion flashed across my mind and I went at once to my desk. It did not take me long to discover that she had been there. The paper was gone, and of course it was in her hands. That is why I wanted her detained at every risk. If I had reached you a little sooner all would be well."

"Ten minutes sooner would have done," replied Copeland, who did not think it policy to tell the broker how long he had held the message unopened.

"Fate was against us, but never mind. We will force her over to our side. The girl has to be found."

"I see that plainly."

"She must be found at once." And Norris Gibbs sent the words through closed teeth. "Who is the best detective in this city?—I mean the man who knows enough to keep his mouth shut if he is well silvered."

"I know half a dozen such fellows, but I would like to try the catching of the girl myself."

The broker looked at Copeland amazed.

"I think I have a clew which I can follow up successfully without the assistance of any of these professional sleuths."

"But you might neglect the other business in hand," cried Gibbs quickly. "You were going to attend to the boy ferret who threatened to give us trouble."

The lawyer laughed.

"I can work two strings at once, Gibbs," he chuckled. "I know something else besides law. Let me try my hand after the runaway."

"Do it, but for fortune's sake don't fail. I wonder how she knows it was after twelve when the affair took place?"

"She did not condescend to enlighten me."

"She appeared to know nothing when the detective questioned her."

"That is true."

"Well, she knows too much to suit me, and the sooner she is effectually muzzled the better for all parties concerned," and Gibbs smiled significantly as he emphasized the last words.

The interview terminated soon after, and the lawyer left the house to be shadowed by the same boy who had watched him to it.

It was not Dodger Dick, although he had the

exact build, face and movements of the wharf spy detective. He had also an eye as keen and as black as the boy sleuth's.

It was the Dodger's double!

CHAPTER VI.

ACROSS A TABLE.

If Dodger Dick could have seen this boy he would have been startled by the resemblance to himself.

It was almost perfect and the double had the Dodger's gait to make the matter the more perplexing.

Copeland had not the least suspicion that he was followed.

He did not go back to the little office over the Square, but proceeded to the Bowery where he was soon lost sight of among the people there.

Not long afterward he reappeared in the house of a woman pretty well known by the name of Bessie Bullion, although her amount of wealth was by no means large.

This woman pretended to tell fortunes, but the secret police knew her for an accomplished fence whose house could tell many a dark tale of stolen property if fortune would just endow it with a tongue.

The woman was surprised to see the lawyer, and for a moment she feared that the call boded her no good, but when he spoke she knew she had nothing to fear.

"Can you take a visitor for a short time?" asked Copeland.

"A boarder you mean, don't you?"

"Well, a boarder," was the reply.

"What is she like?"

"It is not a lady," smiled Copeland. "I am talking about a boy."

Bessie made a show of aversion.

"I don't like boys," she cried.

"You will not be expected to like this one," persisted the lawyer.

"Is he your *protege*?"

"Not much! I wanted to know if you could give him a secure room until further orders. The pay will be excellent and prompt."

The woman's eyes sparkled. The mere mention of money was enough to give them a gleam.

"When will the boy come?" asked Bessie.

"Some time to-night."

"With you?"

"With me."

"What is to be the pay?"

"Twenty dollars a day."

The fortune-teller of the Bowery leaned quickly toward the law-sharp.

"I don't ask many questions," said she, with a peculiar look. "I always think it isn't my business to inquire into the motives of those I have dealings with. Now, some people would ask you why you want the boy boarded, and who he is. You know your own business, Mr. Copeland, and I can only say that I hope it is honorable."

The woman's assumed seriousness was enough to bring a quiet smile to Copeland's lips, and he replied by saying that all his transactions were strictly honorable, which Bessie knew was not true.

"Now for the catch," exclaimed the lawyer to himself, when he had bargained for the boarding of a boy who threatened to give somebody trouble. "I know the woman, Bullion, as well as the next one, and I have no fears of her. Ten dollars added to the daily stipend will make doubly sure the keep, and the boy shadow will discover that he has been directing his wits against the wrong person."

Not long afterward Chubb Copeland was in his office listening to the story of a would-be client who was willing to drop a fee into his ever-hungry purse in return for some much-needed assistance.

At the same time the boy who had watched him to and from the broker's house was talking to two men, one a giant and the other a stout dwarf, under one of the largest trees in Union Square.

"He went to Norris Gibbs's, did he?" asked the big man.

"That's just what he did."

"From there whither?"

"To Bessie Bullion's."

The two men exchanged swift glances.

"Why, that woman—"

The speaker stopped, and caught the boy's smile.

"Why don't you go on? We all know what Bessie is. I reckon she's taken in more swag than any woman of her years in New York."

"So she has, Ted; but we don't like to give her a bad name away from home," was the laughing answer. "What did Lawyer Copeland go to Bessie's for?"

"I don't know."

"Well, we want to find out."

"I can go there, if you say so."

"Do you know Bessie?"

"I reckon I do."

"Then we want you to go and get onto the real business of Chubb Copeland's visit. We are getting along nicely, I think. It is a cute game, and I'll bet a thousand—"

"If you had it, count," put in the little man.

"Of course, Noxie—if I had it. Well, I'd bet double that amount that the scheme originated in the lawyer's pate, and was elaborated by Norris Gibbs, the retired money-shark. But to Bessie Bullion's you go, Ted."

"When?"

"As soon as possible."

"But, see here. There's no danger of the woman mistaking you for your double, Dodger Dick, the wharf-rat sleuth, eh?" asked Noxie.

"I reckon not," laughed the boy. "I guess Bessie knows me from the Dodger. If she doesn't, what is she telling fortunes for, I'd like to know? It won't hurt if I don't get around to Bessie's before night, will it?"

"Perhaps not."

"All right. I'll be there. Now, good-day, gents," and the Dodger's double left the park bench and sprang nimbly away.

The two men watched him several moments in silence.

"A good 'un," decided the little man.

"A regular reynard," was the reply. "He is as shrewd as the Dodger himself, and the resemblance is strong enough to deceive a mother. Chubb Copeland did not go straight to Bessie Bullion's from —th street for nothing. We will get onto another part of the scheme when Ted reports."

As the boy left the Square, his figure was seen by another youth of his own age, and a moment later he had a tracker at his heels!

"I know now that I have a double and yonder he goes," exclaimed the second boy, who was Dodger Dick. "He is the person who visited Norris Gibbs soon after the robbery, and for whom I was mistaken when I went there. And he is in the employ of the big man and his little friend, and they are mixed up in the mysterious Gibbs case, too. I'll just see what is in you, my sprightly shadow, for we have to become acquainted some time."

Dodger Dick followed the boy some distance and saw him enter a cheap restaurant.

He reached the door in time to see him seat himself at one of the back tables.

Dick stole in and without warning dropped into the opposite chair.

The effect on the double was prompt and ludicrous.

"Do I look like anybody you've seen?" asked Dick.

"I should say you do," was the reply. "You are Dodger Dick, ain't you?"

"I am Richard Sly. And you?"

The double hesitated an instant.

"I am Ted Tompkins, sometimes called Tony Ted, though there's not much style about me," answered the double.

The speaker was uneasy, and Dick could see that he had surprised him at an inopportune time to draw him out.

A moment after Ted's reply he pushed his chair back.

"What! are you going?" asked Dick, leaning across the table and touching his double's arm.

"You haven't even ordered yet."

"I don't intend to. I don't know why I dropped in here. I'm not hungry."

"Do you think you'll get the reward?"

Tony Ted's eyes got large.

"What reward?"

"Why, the five thousand dollars offered for the men who plundered Norris Gibbs."

"What do I know about it?"

"Come. I guess I know a thing or two," smiled the Dodger. "You called on the broker soon after the affair. Did he give you much information?"

"Precious little if you want to know," snapped Tony Ted. "How much did he give you?"

"About as much as you got."

"Well, is that all?"

The boy double pushed his chair back again, and drew his arm away.

"It is all for this time, though I want to say that I'm going to beat you if I can."

"You can't do that!" cried Ted.

"You're not much of a sleuth, anyway, Dodger Dick. I don't make any pretensions to being a detective, but I guess I know more about the Gibbs case than you've ever thought of. It was a cool trick, wasn't it?"

"Remarkably cool some people think, but not so sharp after all," was the rejoinder.

"How's that?"

"Live and learn," smiled Dodger Dick. "Maybe Tony Ted isn't the fox he lets on to be, but never mind. I'm not here to compare reputations. If you want to get away, good-by. We'll meet again perchance."

In an instant Tony Ted's eyes got a wicked gleam, and placing both hands on the table, he sprang up and leaned across the board toward the Dodger.

"Have a care, my fellow fox," he cried. "You may underestimate the cunning of Ted Tompkins. If you get that reward it will be after the hardest tussle of your life, and they say you've had some pretty tough ones while on the trail. Look out for number one wherever you are. We don't intend to let the prize get away from us. At any rate, Dodger, it isn't going to drop into your lap. I look like you, but I'm your equal in more ways than one, and your master in several."

These were sarcastic words for Dick to swallow, and they sent the blood boiling through his veins.

If Tony Ted had not withdrawn at the end of his speech, there might have been a collision, for Dick's combativeness had been excited, and he thought of showing the boy double that he was his master with the fist.

At any rate, Tony Ted left before a meeting could take place, and Dick saw his rival quit the restaurant.

"He is confident of his own abilities," thought Dick. "So, Mr. Ted Tompkins, you are going to take in the five thousand! With the assistance of the Hercules and his pard, I presume. Now that I know you, I think I can keep up with your tricks. I see now how Norris Gibbs came to mistake me for the street fox who is after the reward. It is not at all strange any longer. I guess my resemblance to him won't get me into trouble."

The Dodger could think so, but for once in his life he was mistaken, for the fatal likeness was soon to get him into very serious trouble, and he was to feel the game slip through his hands.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DODGER'S FATE.

MR. CHUBB COPELAND did not forget his promise to Norris Gibbs to play detective enough to find out what had become of Lucy Lukens, and who were "the friends" she had spoken of in his presence.

But he had another job on hand, and it was one which he considered of great importance.

The lawyer was firmly convinced that Tony Ted was the boy spy in Foxcraft's employ, and, as we have seen, he was very desirous of entrapping the youngster.

Not long after his visit to Bessie Bullion, in whose house he had engaged secure quarters for the rat he expected to catch, he struck a vein of luck at a time when he did not think one very near.

This was nothing more nor less than the discovery of the person he was looking for, and the lawyer resolved not to lose sight of the young spy until he was ready to nab him.

"I guess you won't try to pump Gibbs any more," exclaimed Copeland, watching the boy from a safe distance. "You seem to like to hang around in the vicinity of my office. Serving your master probably—the Hercules who tried to pump me about the papers that belonged to the girl Lucy. When you get ahead of Chubb Copeland in any way, you'll know it. Just wait till night settles over the city, then I'll show you the swoop of a night-hawk that'll startle you out of your shoes."

Night did not come a moment too soon for the lawyer-sharp.

The boy had led him several times from the Square, but he had not lost sight of him, and when the hour for the swoop arrived he found him just where he wanted him—not very far from the fortune-teller's house.

If the rascal's victim was suspicious of any foul play he exhibited no signs of it, and Copeland was overjoyed at finding everything playing so nicely into his hands.

It happened that the boy ferret was walking leisurely down the Bowery when the lawyer caught up with him.

All at once the youth felt a hand grip on his arm, and he turned to see the eyes of Copeland glaring viciously at him.

"See here; do you know who you've caught?" demanded the boy.

"I reckon I do," and the lawyer leaned forward and continued in menacing tones:

"You don't want to make a fuss, my young rat. I've got it in my power to throw you into an almighty strong pickle. So come along, and keep a still tongue in your head."

"I guess you've made a big mistake."

"Not by a long shot."

"Who am I?"

"Oh, it's not necessary to repeat your name. You may have a dozen for aught I know. Come with me."

"Are you an officer?"

"What if I am not? I'm connected with the courts and I guess that's enough. You'd better have kept close to Hercules: that's what you should have done."

"Ho! ho!" laughed Copeland's bird. "You think I have a big friend, do you?"

"Never mind what I think. There are some things I know," was the rejoinder.

"I'll call the police!"

"Try it!" and the lawyer's clutch tightened as he spoke and the boy was pushed into the mouth of a narrow side street almost as dark as an alley.

There, before he could resist, he was dragged forcibly toward a door which opened promptly, in answer to several peculiar signals by the toe of Copeland's boot.

"Well, you've brought him, I see," exclaimed a voice, unmistakably a female's.

"I told you I would," answered the lawyer with undisguised glee. "Get a light if you want to get a peep at your boarder."

"Fetch him into the back room."

Copeland's prisoner soon stood in a small room, and a large and rather good-looking woman of forty was holding a lamp close to his face.

"I've been lying low for this very chap," suddenly exclaimed the Bowery fortune-teller, looking up into the lawyer's expectant face.

"You have, eh?"

"Yes. Don't you see by his look that he knows me?"

"Don't I, Bessie Bullion?" cried the boy, stepping back and looking fearlessly into the woman's eyes. "I guess I don't know enough good about you to give you one feather for your future seraph pinions. So you've been lying low for me, have you? Well, Chubb Copeland ought to receive your thanks for fetching me to your den."

"You heard what he said?" and the woman's eyes fairly flashed as she turned upon Copeland. "This house of mine is a den according to his impudent estimate. Won't I show him that a tigress inhabits it before he gets out?"

"I hope you will. This young chap is an involuntary boarder, but I want you to keep your part of the agreement."

Copeland turned and with a final triumphant glance at his prisoner walked away.

"Once more, Chubb," called the boy, and there was a mischievous twinkle in his eyes which the gravity of the situation could not suppress. "I'd like to have you tell me in plain language who you think I am."

The lawyer stopped and gave the boy a stare of amazement.

"Why do you want to know that?" exclaimed he. "Do you think I've been watching you nearly all the afternoon without knowing what I was about? I'm no chump, am I, Bessie? Ha! ha! ha!"

"Oh, well; think what you please," laughed the boy. "If you haven't caught the wrong pigeon in your net I hope I may never see Mother Sturgeon any more."

"The wrong pigeon, eh? I guess not."

There was no response by the young prisoner, and when the lawyer left the room he was followed by the fortune-teller, who caught his arm in the hall just beyond.

"Really, haven't you made a mistake?" asked Bessie in a voice whose seriousness impressed the city sharp.

"Of course not, woman. The boy in there is the very one I bargained for you to take. If you have been lying low for him, as you say, I suppose you don't object to my little play."

"Who is the boy?"

"Tony Ted is one of his names. He may have half a dozen others."

Bessie dropped the lawyer's arm and fell back.

"That boy in there Tony Ted, the amateur boy sleuth?" she exclaimed. "Well, he isn't, and I'll wager my head on it!"

Copeland's eyes dilated with wonder.

"Maybe I don't know who I've caught?"

"If you call your prisoner Tony Ted, you don't."

"Then who is he?"

"Dodger Dick, the young detective of the docks."

"I see; it's a case of mistaken identity with you, Bessie," responded the lawyer. "You will hold that boy as Tony Ted, but if you wish, you can treat him as you would treat Dodger Dick, whom you don't appear to like."

"Like him? I should say not! Less than a year ago he put the police on a scent, for which trick I said I would pay him back if I had to live a hundred years to do it. He may be Tony Ted to you, Mr. Copeland, but to me he is quite another person, and you couldn't please me better than you have done."

"Hold him fast. We'll make it thirty dollars a day, Bessie. You're mistaken about the youngster being Dodger Dick, though, but never mind that. Don't forget my injunction. Hold him fast!"

The woman replied with a look and a smile that were answer enough for Norris Gibbs's partner, and he left the house with a light heart.

"Can I be mistaken?" thought Bessie, going back to the room in which she had left her new boarder. "Don't I know the two boys apart? I can settle the vexed question in a jiffy, and I'll do it before I proceed a step further."

Half a minute later Dick heard the click of a key in a lock and Bessie of the Bowery stood before him.

Her intensely eager eyes were fixed on him from the first, and she came forward with quick strides.

"Take off your coat!" she commanded, bending over the astonished boy.

"What for?"

"Never mind. Take off your coat, I say."

For a moment the boy's eyes seemed to glisten with resistance, but he quickly shed the garment.

Bessie watched the operation with a great deal of impatience.

"Now roll up your right sleeve."

The command was obeyed, and the woman caught the lamp from the table and leaned forward with it in her hand.

"I told him so, but he would not believe it!" she muttered, then she caught the boy's eye as she looked up.

"You are Dodger Dick, aren't you?" she cried.

"I'm no one else, Bessie," was the prompt confession. "Copeland caught the person he wasn't looking for. I tried to tell him so when he played his hand, but he would not let me."

"I'm glad he would not, Mister Dodger Dick. I guess you know why?"

There was a moment of silence between the pair.

"He calls you Tony Ted, but he couldn't fool me," continued the woman. "You two boys are as much alike as two straws, but the test I have just applied settles the question. Ted has a curious-looking scar on his right arm. You have none, you see."

"If I had you would have called me Tony Ted, wouldn't you?"

"Yes."

"This is what comes of having a double," mused the Dodger aloud, with a smile.

"Yes, your counterpart has thrown you into trouble. You don't expect me to treat you like a prince, Dodger Dick—not after what you did less than a year ago?"

The young dock spy could not mistake the intentions of the woman as revealed by her eyes.

He had fallen into the hands of a person who had cause for hating him.

The fatal resemblance had worked him incalculable mischief.

"Ah, you see it is my chance to get even!" the fortune-teller of the Bowery went on. "I haven't had to live a hundred years to pay you back for your dastardly trick of a few months ago. You don't know Bess Bullion, Dodger. You may have heard a good deal about her, but you will learn soon that the half was never told you. This house is a den, sure enough, and the tigress stands before you, my young sleuth of the slums!"

The following moment the boy ferret was pounced upon with all the fury of a wild beast, and he found himself lifted clear of the floor in the iron grip of Bessie Bullion.

Oh, that fatal resemblance!

It threatened to put a speedy end to his last trail.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LIE FOR A LIE.

"I RECKON the Dodger didn't get much out of me. He knows that he isn't going to have fair sailing for the five thousand, and maybe he will find out something else before long."

In a strain like this mused the boy who strolled through Union Square about the time of Dodger Dick's entrance into Bessie Bullion's house at the hands of Chubb Copeland, the lawyer.

"Hello," called a voice near by, and the youth, who was Tony Ted, stopped and waited for the speaker to come up.

"I thought you were going to Bessie's house?" the man continued.

"So I am."

"When?"

"In a little while."

The boy double's companion was not Foxcraft, the City Hercules, but the stout-built little man called Noxie.

He joined the ferret near the Square, and the couple walked on in silence for a few moments.

"See here, Ted," suddenly cried Noxie. "Do you know that the broker's ward, Lucy, has decamped—left the ranch as it were?"

Tony Ted showed some astonishment.

"It is not for good, Noxie?" he replied.

"I think so."

"How did you find out?"

"I picked up Bob Blandy to-day."

"Ah! the young man who found Norris Gibbs bound and gagged in his chair the morning after the robbery?"

"The same fellow."

"I've been looking for him. He keeps dark as if he is afraid some of the detectives who are after the reward might question him too close. He told you that Lucy has gone away, did he?"

"He did."

"Well, the girl has to be found."

"For what she knows?"

"Partly for that. If she left without the broker's consent, he will try to hunt her up. Did you ever play detective, Noxie?"

The little man drew back and looked at Ted with an amused expression.

"I never tried my hand at the business. I'd make a sorry man-catcher. Foxcraft'd do better, I think."

"I'd like to know what Norris Gibbs thinks about Lucy going off. He wouldn't give me an opinion, for I got no information about the robbery when I went to his house for the express purpose of pumping him. If you could drop in on Gibbs about this time, the hour is early, and intimate that you saw Lucy somewhere to-day, I think you could pick up some valuable information."

"Do you really want me to do this?"

"I do. Norris Gibbs doesn't know you. I would get fired out before I had a chance to open my talk-trunk. Why, you could play the band to perfection, Noxie."

The boy's remarks seemed to inspire the little man with confidence in his abilities.

"I've half a mind to try it," he answered.

"We must know what has become of Lucy Lukens. Without this knowledge our game will amount to nothing in the end. By Jupiter! Ted, I'll risk the venture."

Not long afterward the two separated, the boy double directing his steps to Bessie Bullion's house, while Noxie walked toward the broker's domicile.

We will follow the latter.

Noxie was shrewd, but not very agile.

He was too short and stout to move about with much nimbleness, and when he came in contact with agility he was forced to acknowledge his failing.

He reached Norris Gibbs's house a short time after separating from Dodger Dick's Double, and jerked the bell with much impatience.

He was answered by the same young man who on a similar occasion had barred the Dodger's way into the house.

"Is Mr. Gibbs in?" asked Noxie.

"I think not."

"I wish you would see."

The servant walked into the library and shut the door after him.

Noxie took a long step down the hall, and leaned forward in listening attitude.

Norris Gibbs was writing at a desk.

"A man wants to see you, sir," began the youth.

"Another detective?"

"He doesn't look like one."

"What is he like?"

"Short and stout."

"A business man, think you, Harry?"

"He doesn't look like one, sir."

The ex-broker put some papers back into a drawer, and whirled his chair.

"Show the gentleman in."

Noxie had heard every word of this conversation, thanks to his keen ears and a loose transom.

"He doesn't want to see everybody, I perceive," he ejaculated. "But he is going to give me audience. I am short and stout, and I don't look much like a business man either. Oh, well! it takes all kinds of people to make up a world, and I'm one of the odd specimens."

In a moment the servant was back in the hall, and Noxie walked into the library promptly on the announcement that Gibbs would see him.

In crossing the threshold he struck the sill in an awkward manner, and but for a lucky recovery in the nick of time, he would have landed unceremoniously in the broker's lap.

Norris Gibbs laughed at Noxie's misfortune, but an instant later his countenance assumed a stern seriousness, and he coldly waved the would-be detective to a chair.

"What is it, sir?" he asked. "You wish to see me, I am told. On business, of course."

"Yes, on business," echoed Noxie. "I overheard, accidentally, understand, a conversation which led me to believe that the young lady who has been living with you has gone away without your knowledge."

"You did, eh?" exclaimed Gibbs.

"Yes, sir."

"When did you obtain this information?"

"About an hour ago."

"Where?"

"In Battery Park."

"You are certain of this?"

Noxie flushed. He did not like this rapid fire of questions.

"I generally retain what I hear," he retorted, with some sharpness. "I thought you might want to receive the benefit of my information, and as the parties whom I overheard, seemed to rejoice over the young lady's departure, I considered it my duty to report to you."

"My dear fellow, I am obliged to you, but the young miss is gone."

Noxie almost fell from his chair.

"At home at this time?" he cried.

"At this time," said Gibbs, coolly, crossing his legs.

The reply seemed to take the little man's breath.

"She was gone for a season, but not without my consent," the broker went on. "I don't keep runaway girls about me, Mr.—"

"Mark Truxton."

"Ah! yes, Mr. Truxton. Your disinterestedness is very pleasing, but really, as you see, I have no use for the news."

Noxie was perplexed.

Norris Gibbs did not ask after the men who had rejoiced over Lucy's supposed flight; nothing about their exact conversation either.

Why was he not anxious for information of this kind?

There was an embarrassing silence after the broker's last words.

Noxie twisted uneasily in his chair.

"A bad box and nothing in it, besides!" he mentally ejaculated. "I'm going to get away from here as soon as I can. The boy may have thought there was something here for me, but there's not an item. So the girl has come back? I wonder if she came without being hunted up?"

The little man broke the pause by picking up his hat and stammering an excuse for interrupting the broker at his private business.

Gibbs replied in the blandest of tones that it was no interruption at all, and Noxie was dismissed with killing courtesy.

"He got no gold in this mine," laughed the broker, dropping back into his chair. "He is the companion of the big man, who was so cool in Copeland's office last night. I knew him the moment I got my eyes on him, and I was determined to watch him. I guess I came out of the tussle slightly ahead. He was staggered by my reply that Lucy was at home. You have to meet a liar with a lie sometimes, and if I can't do it when it becomes necessary, you need not call in any one else."

By this time Noxie was moving down the street still bewildered by his passage at arms with the New York broker.

"I feel like shaking Tony Ted out of his shoes," he growled. "I wonder if Norris Gibbs knew me. No! how could he? But it wasn't a very successful play. Some—how—other I can't help feeling that it was not."

No, it was not successful, for the broker had recognized the sharp, and his quick wits had fashioned a falsehood which had done its work in an admirable manner.

If Noxie had lingered near Norris Gibbs's house he would have seen the figure of the broker descend the steps shortly after his departure.

Gibbs was not very far behind the little man

when he moved off, but there was no probability of the men meeting on the street.

The broker went straight to a certain little office above the golden-leaved trees in Union Square.

He was eager and anxious.

In a flurry of excitement he burst suddenly into the presence of a man who greeted him with an exclamation of pleasure.

"I told you I'd catch the young reynard! It is done, and the trap he is in opens only at our command!" exclaimed this man.

"That is good news of the sort," replied Gibbs.

"I have just had a visitor—a stout little man—"

"The giant's companion!" interrupted the other who was Copeland, the lawyer. "Was he at your house?"

"Yes."

"What did he want?"

"He was anxious to tell me that Lucy had run away."

"Ho! And you told him, what?"

"That she had come back. I staggered the fellow."

"I should think so. A bolt like that would have knocked me down."

"They are up to something," and a shadow of momentary fear crossed the broker's face. "The little man knew of Lucy's flight, and he was probably aware that she is still away. Luke Lovell, the detective, thinks he has a clew to the two men who gagged and robbed me."

"Does he? shrewd fellow!" laughed the lawyer.

"Look here, Gibbs. The mystery is bound to take its place among the police puzzles of New York. One of the best sleuths of Mulberry street told me only yesterday that it was insoluble. I always said so, you know, by Jove! ha, ha!"

Norris Gibbs rubbed his hands with evident satisfaction.

"So the boy shadow is actually safe?" he asked.

"Of course. Bess Bullion has a new boarder. I guess that is enough, eh?"

"You know the woman and must take chances with her. I would like to look at that package again."

"Which one?"

"Number two."

The lawyer left his chair and went to the safe.

"I had to get an expert to open this safe this morning," he said. "I must have mixed up the old combination with something else, my head is so full of important matters now."

Norris Gibbs watched Copeland nervously while he worked with the nickel knob, and when he swung the heavy door open he let out a sigh of relief.

"Package number two?" remarked the lawyer unlocking a small inside drawer. "You shall have it with pleasure."

The next instant the Union Square law-sharp fell back as if a rattlesnake had sprung out of the drawer just opened.

Norris Gibbs jumped up and darted forward, and Copeland with a ghastly face pointed to the drawer.

It was empty!

CHAPTER IX.

STILL IN THE NET.

LET us go back to Dodger Dick.

When the young sleuth felt himself in the grip of Bess of the Bowery, and saw the light that burned fiercely in the woman's eyes, he realized more fully than ever before that he had fallen into very bad hands.

He had no right to expect any mercy at the woman's hands, for had he not but a few months before put the secret police on a trail which had given Bessie considerable trouble?

"I don't want your life now. No, that would not do!" cried the infuriated woman, whose fingers seemed to burn their way to the boy's bones. "I'm not here to kill some people as I ought to. But you are going to feel the vengeance of Bess Bullion, just the same!"

Dodger Dick expected to be hurled against the wall by the infuriated woman; but all at once he was released, and Bessie drew off and glared at him with the rage of a panther.

"I'll see you again!" she suddenly cried, and then, without giving the young ferret a chance to answer, she whirled and flashed out of the apartment.

"That's better than I expected," muttered the Dodger. "The wall and I did not have a collision, and I have no broken bones. I ought to congratulate myself that it is no worse, for wild beasts seldom drop their prey unhurt."

He knew he was a prisoner in the room, for he had heard a key click as Bessie shut

the door, and he did not go forward to inspect the lock.

"Chubb Copeland will open his eyes if Ted Tompkins, my double, serves him a neat trick of some kind," thought the boy. "He was a little too positive to-night. The resemblance is almost perfect, but I have no scar on my right arm as Bessie says Tony Ted has."

To be imprisoned in a room in the Bowery house when he wanted to be out the worst kind, was not a pleasant situation for the wharf detective.

He did not know how soon the woman would return with some dark plan in her head, and he had no desire to await her coming.

"I must get out of here!" was the thought that constantly filled his brain. "No trap has ever held me very long, though I've been in some pretty tight ones. I must get out, I say."

For some time after the woman's departure, silence reigned throughout the house.

Dodger Dick went to the window, and by close attention heard the noise and rattle of the Bowery at night.

He made a thorough tour of the room; he climbed to the transom above the door, but it was protected by iron bars, and was fast.

At last he heard human voices beyond the door that opened into the hall.

One was Bessie's.

"You don't think as much of your old friends as you used to," Dick heard.

"Yes, I do, but I don't tell everything I know. You know how I make my living, Ted Tompkins."

Dodger Dick could hardly suppress a rising cry as he started.

His double was out there!

"I don't want you to tell me all you know," persisted Ted. "I merely asked you if Lawyer Chubb Copeland wasn't here to-day."

"If that's all you want to know, he was," was the reply.

"He's got a job on his hands. I know that, and so do you, Bessie."

"I don't know anything."

Dick imagined that the aggravating reply angered the boy double, for he cried:

"Don't know anything and yet you talk!"

with a laugh. "You're a queer one, Bessie. Keep your secrets. I don't want you to betray the law-sharp. He has a perfect right to come here."

"You're tracking for somebody."

"Do you think so?"

"You are. Your questions give you away, Tony Ted."

"Very well. Enjoy the discovery if it promises to do you any good. Copeland is a cool, shrewd fellow, but his cunning will not save him."

"What have you against him?"

"Truth for truth, woman."

"No! I'm no traitress. You come to the wrong place for information. I don't betray."

"All right. I'll just get out and let the police in."

"Into this house?" almost screamed the woman, and Dick fancied there was a spring, for he heard a quick step. "No insinuations, Tony Ted. Intimate that you will fetch the cops here, and I will show you that I am not defenceless."

Eager to see what was going on Dodger Dick mounted to the transom by the assistance of the door-knob.

The hall was before him, and by pressing one of his cheeks against the iron bars he could see to the front door.

Under the lamp in the hallway stood Tony Ted and Bessie.

The woman exhibited the degree of anger indicated by her tones and his double stood pacing her with one arm partly raised as if to ward off an attack.

"What a photograph they'd make just now!" exclaimed Dick as he watched the pair. "Sardonically give a bonus for the tableau just as it stands. If Ted plays another bold hand he'll find himself in the clutches of the Bowery tigress. I would advise you not to test her claws, Ted. They are terribly keen."

"Mebbe you're in with Lawyer Copeland, but I don't care if you are," continued the boy double, backing toward the door. "He would like to lay hands on me, I fancy; but he's not used to catching foxes. I guess I'll say good-night Bessie. You don't like to see me here just now so I'll not interrupt the even tenor of your existence."

Dodger Dick saw the Bowery seeress move forward quickly as Tony Ted threw one hand back and touched the knob.

"Say, Ted; there's a boy who looks like you," said the woman dropping her voice a notch though not too low to prevent it from reaching Dodger Dick's ears.

The young double pretended to be struck with surprise.

"I have no double," he exclaimed.

"Yes, you have."

"Then, I'd like to see him."

Bessie Bullion shook her head and laughed.

"You'll have to hunt him up if you would enjoy that pleasure," she answered.

"Who is he?"

"Some call him Dodger Dick. Do you know him?"

"I guess not."

"The little truth-stretcher!" cried the young prisoner. "If I could get my door open he'd own up to having seen me if nothing more. Doesn't know me, eh? He is giving Bessie some rich taffy and for a purpose, too."

"Where is this countefet of me, Bessie?" asked Ted.

"Everywhere."

The woman from her actions evidently believed that the boy double knew more about Dodger Dick than he wanted to tell.

"You don't want to tell me that you've played sleuth all over New York and never heard of Dick of the docks," she exclaimed looking straight into Tony Ted's face. "I can't see that I've surprised you much. Confess that you know your double."

"Never saw him!" replied Ted unblushingly.

Bess of the Bowery said no more, but went to another subject in a way that was amusing.

It told Tony Ted that she did not put the least faith in his asseverations.

He might deceive some people with a deliberate falsehood, but not Bessie Bullion who knew him so well.

Dodger Dick was curious to see the end of the interview.

Bess and Ted did not return to him any more, and after awhile the boy bade the woman good-night and went out.

"He can't deceive me!" observed the woman, turning back toward the boy detective's prison. "He knows the boy I've got in the trap, but I wasn't going to let them meet. They may be friends. Who knows?"

Without noise Dodger Dick had descended from his perch of observation, and was quietly awaiting a visit from the woman, but none came.

Bessie went down the hall to a flight of steps beyond a closet door, and a minute afterward she stood in a dark place that had a damp and musty smell.

"Why not?" said the woman, grasping a rope which she found in the darkness as readily as though a lamp had lighted her to it. "Didn't I say that I'd pay him back if I had to live a hundred years to do it? Sold my scheme out to the cops, didn't he? I am to have thirty a day while I board the Dodger, but the money doesn't come from Chubb Copeland's pocket because he has none. I can draw my pay as long as I wish even if I pull the rope now."

At this moment a strange sound came clearly to Bessie Bullion's ears.

She dropped the rope and started toward the steps.

"Somebody is up there," she murmured, listening. "It is a man, and he is hunting me."

The woman went up the steps and stopped at the closet door with eyes on the alert.

Presently a figure came into view.

"What do you want?" asked Bess.

With a quick start the man turned and came forward.

"I've found you, thank fortune!" the words seemed to come out in gasps. "You were right, Bessie, and I was wrong. The boarder I brought you is not the person I thought he was."

The woman's eyes fairly sparkled.

"What did I tell you? But, no! you knew everything."

"He is Dodger Dick," continued the man, who was our old acquaintance, Chubb Copeland.

"How did you find it out?"

"I ran against the other boy just now."

"You did, eh? Why didn't you pick him up?"

"Catch a fox when he knows you want him, will you?" grinned the lawyer. "Bessie, I want your help just now. By some means or other that young rascal must fall into my hands. I don't care how. The boy you hold you may turn loose if you will."

"Turn him out?" And the woman's face seemed to get a sudden blaze of indignation.

"You brought me the right boy after all, though

the wrong one in your eyes. Turn him loose shall I? When did you lose your head, Chubb Copeland?"

The amazed lawyer drew back and stared at Bess.

"If I'm not mistaken it would be a bad day for you if I were to follow your permission," she went on. "No, sir! I turn no serpent out to bite me some day. I'll take the other boarder if you pay me enough, but something startling must be in the air if you are afraid of a boy. Ted Tompkins is a slick one, and you'll find him your match."

"Do you think so?"

"Try him and see."

"I will, and win, too!" cried the lawyer. "Before morning, if I get a chance, I'll fasten the hooks on him and show him a thing or two. Then we'll have both of the boy Dromios, and you can get even with your pest and help me to fix mine."

"Bring him on!" answered Bess with a laugh, and the Union Square legal shark repeated his boast and clinched it with an oath which made it stronger—to his notion.

CHAPTER X.

VALUABLE DOCUMENTS.

CHUBB COPELAND left Bessie Bullion's house in a dazed way.

Hard upon the startling discovery of the condition of the treasure-drawer of his safe, he had found out that the boy captured and brought to the Bowery den was *not* the one wanted.

The lawyer felt like a person who receives a stunning blow.

"Something's got to be done, and that soon," he murmured. "It was the fatal resemblance that fooled me. It can't happen again, however, for Bess has one of the Dromios safe enough, and the next one I pick up will be the right party. The person who robbed me of those papers evidently knows just what he wanted. Was it Foxcraft, the City Hercules? No; he could not have entered my room without waking me. Could it have been his stout little companion? No, again. By Jupiter! it must have been the boy. Didn't I see Foxcraft and the young scamp in the Park together? I hate boys. I always did, and these city gamins are the meanest ones we have."

Copeland was in no good humor when he walked away from the fortune-teller's with his eyes on the alert for Tony Ted, the Boy Double.

"I've got two jobs on hand now; one is to find that boy, and the other to get onto Lucy's trail. The girl I think will not be hard to find, and I can afford to let her go till I strike the young thief's trail. Let me see. Where shall I begin?"

The lawyer turned suddenly into a street at his right hand, and speedily disappeared.

"You looked excited, Mr. Chubb Copeland. Has some rival lawyer taken a case out of your hands? Be careful, old fellow, or you will give yourself away to some parties who may throw you into hot water."

These words, which were not heard by the New York lawyer, came from the mouth of a boy who had followed him almost from the very steps of Bessie Bullion's house.

Of course he was Dodger Dick's rival, and when he saw the lawyer vanish he turned and walked in the opposite direction, as if he considered further pursuit worthless.

"What did you discover?" eagerly asked a man who was joined by the boy in one of the numerous open parks of the city not long afterward. "You went to Bessie's?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Chubb Copeland was there sure enough."

"I told you so."

"Bess wasn't very communicative," continued the boy.

"Didn't you get anything out of her?"

"Not enough to do us any good."

Foxcraft's countenance fell.

"I think I see through it all, Ted," he answered, leaning confidentially toward the boy on the bench with him and lowering his voice. "I have figured a little since I saw you, and I've come to the conclusion that the girl is at Bessie's."

Tony Ted drew back and looked amazed into the big man's face.

"You don't think that, Captain Ferd, do you?" he exclaimed.

"I do."

"Well, I can't think so. The girl, Lucy Lukens, has left the broker's; we've got onto that, you know. Noxie may discover something by visiting Norris Gibbs, and he may not get a particle of news."

"Here comes Noxie now."

At that moment the short little man came up and halted in front of the pair.

"Lucy has come home," spoke Noxie, and his words nearly lifted Foxcraft from the bench.

"I don't believe it!" cried the New York Hercules. "The girl wouldn't be going back to Norris Gibbs this soon if she left him for good."

"He said she went out with his knowledge and consent."

"He told you this?"

"Yes."

"It is false—false, I say," responded Foxcraft in tones that made the boy double clutch his sleeve and advise him to be careful.

The stout little man took a seat on the bench and gave an account of his interview with Norris Gibbs.

Foxcraft and Tony Ted listened attentively till the last word was out.

"Did he seem to be spinning a yarn?" asked the boy.

"Not at all."

"I guess he was, though. The girl is not home. I think I can find her within two hours."

"Do it!" cried Foxcraft, turning on the young detective. "Haven't we got about everything else? I still believe that she is at Bess Bullion's house, and that her presence there drew Chubb Copeland to the place."

The boy shook his head.

"You don't believe this enough to try to find out," continued Foxcraft, smiling.

"I will try, if you insist."

"I insist. We must know where the girl is. You say you can find her within two hours. Well, you won't get her anywhere than in the Bowery trap. We want the house searched. You know it well, Ted."

"Don't I?" grinned the boy double. "If there is a portion of that famous place I don't know all about I'd like to see it."

Before the conference in the park broke up it was determined that Tony Ted should go back to the Bowery den and search it thoroughly for Lucy Lukens.

"We're getting the upper hand at last," laughed Foxcraft, looking across a table into his companion's face some time afterward, and in a room not very far from the place of conference.

"It looks that way, but we can't name our price till we have the girl secure," was the reply.

"But we'll have her soon after Ted locates the prize. You can't estimate the value of those papers," and the city giant left his chair and went to one corner of the room, where he not only took up the carpet, but also raised one of the boards that formed the floor.

Thrusting his hand into the opening thus revealed he drew forth a large yellow envelope with which he came back to his comrade.

"Here they are, Noxie," he went on, dumping out upon the table the contents of the packet, which consisted of legal papers resembling deeds. "Here is the prize for which some of the best detectives of New York are looking, with all their cunning to back them up. It is a very mysterious affair, eh, Noxie?—very mysterious, I should say. Look at 'em there. Ain't they worth five thousand dollars? Why, I wouldn't sell 'em for half a million if my name was on 'em instead of a certain other person's."

The short man drew the papers toward him, and ran over them with nimble fingers and sharp eyes.

"I guess they're worth all you claim they are," he replied, pushing them back when he had completed the examination.

"Of course. They deed to Lucy Luken's property worth ten times as much as we expect to accumulate in our lifetime, Noxie. The broker—shrewd Norris Gibbs—was keeping these papers in trust for the girl. They were to be surrendered to her on her birthday at which time, you know, his guardianship was to come to an end. Lucy knew that some papers were to fall into her hands, but the value of them was unknown to her. She never knew how much her father was worth when he died, and I guess Norris Gibbs and his lawyer did not go out of their way to tell her."

While Foxcraft spoke he put the papers back into the envelope which he bore back to the treasury under the floor.

"Our safe has no combination-lock, but it is just as secure as with one," he smiled to Noxie.

"The boy knows nothing about it?"

"Of course not."

"Tony Ted is shrewd and, I trust, faithful."

Foxcraft's brow instantly darkened and his eyes seemed to flash as he leaned toward his partner.

"Faithful? He knows enough not to be otherwise," he hissed. "Let me catch him playing us—let me even suspicion him, and somebody will go out like that!" and the City Hercules snapped his fingers in the listener's face.

"He's done us good service so far, count."

"Very good."

"And if he finds Lucy at Bess Bullion's to-night he'll deserve a big reward."

"He will get it, too!" cried Foxcraft. "Tony Ted is smarter than his double, Dodger Dick. What a team of young sleuths the two would make! But they will never work together, for they don't like one another very well. Rivalship will always keep them apart. Ted told me about the restaurant scene where the dock ferret declared he would rake in the five thousand dollars reward when the game was played out. But I hardly think he will, do you, Noxie?" and Foxcraft leaned back in his chair and burst into a triumphant laugh.

Meantime the boy double, faithful to his promise to the two men, went back to the Bowery.

"I half believe that Bessie has a new secret," said he to himself. "She seemed very anxious to know if I knew Dodger Dick, and it took some tall talk to satisfy her. I don't think I succeeded altogether. Bess is a woman who suspicions easily, and I know she doesn't like a hair on Dodger Dick's head. What is the new secret she is keeping? I am going to her place, and I may make a discovery before I come away."

Tony Ted, the boy double, did not attempt to effect an entrance in Bessie's house by the front way.

He plunged into the alley that ran past one end of the building, and soon found himself in the cramped back yard attached to it.

It was not Ted's first visit to these premises, for he went straight to the door of a shed-like back building, and opened it by pulling a cord that dangled along the weather-boarding overhead.

He crept noiselessly into the building, which was as dark as Egypt beyond the threshold.

To get into the house without its tenant's knowledge was the idea uppermost in the boy shadow's brain.

The second door yielded with a little more trouble than the opening of the first had cost, and Tony Ted was fairly in the house of the Bowery fortune-teller and fence.

He had reached a room well filled with many articles of furniture that could have been dispensed with.

"This is Bessie's store-room," thought the boy. "She has fixed it up on purpose to hood-wink the police and—"

Tony Ted stopped abruptly, for a door was thrown open abruptly, and before he could spring behind the nearest shelter he stood before Bessie herself.

One look seemed to be enough for the woman. "Still in the cage, my bird!" she cried. "Now, Dodger Dick, I'll let you feel the claws of Bowery Bess!" And the next instant Tony Ted felt two hands at his throat.

CHAPTER XI.

A TIGHT SQUEEZE.

THE boy double did not have time to cry out and tell the enraged woman that she had committed a terrible blunder.

His eyeballs seemed ready to start from his head, and Bowery Bess and everything else in the hall swam before his sight in wild confusion.

The woman's grip continued to tighten at the boy's throat, and when she suddenly released him he fell like a dead weight at the foot of the wall.

"I guess you'll not try to escape from my cage any more," laughed Bess. "You may be a shrewd tracker, Dodger Dick, but you can't outwit Bess Bullion. Now when Lawyer Copeland catches Tony Ted and brings him in, I reckon I can devote all my time to him—if I'm paid enough for it," added the woman with a grin.

If Bowery Bess had looked at the right arm of the boy who had succumbed to her heartless clutch, she would have made a thrilling discovery, but instead of doing this, so certain was she that she had caught the right party, she took up the body and carried it down the steps which led to the basement of the building.

There was no sign of life about the old fury's victim, and Bess laid her burden down without any gentleness and shut the heavy door after her when she went away.

"In fortune's name, where am I?" cried a voice in the darkness of the cellar some time after Bess's departure. "My throat is as sore as

a boil, and my head spins. What happened to cause this? Let me try to think for a minute."

The speaker leaned heavily against a rough stone wall, damp with cold moisture that clung to his hand and had a disagreeable smell.

"I recollect now. Bowery Bess had me by the throat the last thing I remember. She mistook me for Dodger Dick. It is a fatal resemblance, and came very near finishing me. From what she said they must have had the wharf rat penned up in the house, and I got in just in time to be taken for him. I don't like this. But I must get out of here as soon as possible and by some means or other."

Tony Ted soon discovered that he was a prisoner in a cellar which had a closed window and one door.

The door was shut and securely locked so there was no escape in that direction, and he was obliged to depend on the window.

After an hour of unceasing work with his hand, he had no tools at his command, the boy double succeeded in loosening the window enough to give him a scanty passage out.

Drawing himself up to the little casement he began to squeeze through the aperture. It was very hard work for Tony Ted, probably the hardest of the kind he had ever had. The window frame was very small, and his body was too large to accommodate itself to it without great effort.

He tugged and sweat over the labor until after prodigious efforts, he drew himself through and crawled upon the sidewalk beyond the hole.

"Fortune favor me with no more such squeezes," ejaculated Ted eagerly filling his lungs with the cool night air that rushed into them. "I owe all this to you Bowery Bess, and it isn't by your grace that I'm alive to crow over this victory. You won't get another opportunity to mistake me for Dodger Dick. I'll see to that if I get half a chance, and I've got more than that I think!"

A minute after his escape Ted Tompkins was bounding away as if eager to put the greatest possible space between himself and the Bowery den in the least possible time.

In his efforts to squeeze through the cellar window he had almost deprived himself of his garments, and he wanted to reach a certain place where he could effect a change.

"Here! what has happened? You've been fighting again."

With the utterance of these words Tony Ted felt a hand catch his sleeve, and he stopped and looked into the face of Dodger Dick!

It was a startling encounter for the boy double, and for a moment his eye gleamed madly and he jerked away and assumed a beligerent attitude.

"It was all your fault!" he suddenly cried, taking a sensible view of the situation and breaking out into a good-natured laugh.

"My fault? How so?"

"I can't tell you just *how*, but if it hadn't been for mistaken identity, I'd have decent clothes on my back just now."

"Where did you come from?" asked the Dodger.

"From where you have been, I suppose."

A thoughtful light filled the dock ferret's eyes.

"Then you must have been taken for me by the old she tiger," said he.

"That's just how it was," was the reply.

"You did not fare very well at her hands, I take it?"

"I should say not!" and Ted ground his teeth at thought of his treatment by Bowery Bess.

"I say again it was all your fault, Dodger Dick. Why can't you look like some one else?"

"Why can't *you*?"

Tony Ted was about to move on, remembering that he had to report to Foxcraft and Noxie, but Dick kept him back.

"We ought not antagonize one another in this case," the wharf spy said. "It is all for justice. Somebody has been defrauded by a robbery, and if you really want to see right triumph, you ought to help me if you can."

The effect of these words on the boy double was curious. He twisted uneasily in his rags with the keen eyes of the Dodger upon him, and hardly knew what to say.

"You told me at the restaurant that you were going to win," he finally replied.

"So I did."

"Do you mean it yet?"

"I do."

"I admire your pluck, Dodger, but you can't win without help. It is utterly impossible. I am talking from what I know, and when I say that you can't recover the missing papers without help, you can't, and that's the end of it."

"That is what you say, Tony Ted," answered the Dodger.

"It is what I know!"

"I see what you mean. Unless you help me, I will fail!"

There was no reply, but the boy double drew his figure up and looked a little wise.

"Do you want me to ask you to help me?" continued Dodger Dick.

"If you did mebbe you wouldn't get a favorable reply," came the answer prompt and emphatically.

"All right. Pass on, Tony! We'll see who laughs last."

The Dodger stepped to one side and looked at the boy to whom he had given passage down the pavement.

"Do you mean that?" asked Ted, hesitating.

"Every word of it."

"Who put you on this trail?"

"No one."

"Not Lucy Lukens?"

"No."

"Nor the young man, her lover, who sometimes meets her in the Park?"

"No."

"You're after the five thousand dollars, then?"

The young double was silent for a moment during which time he studied Dodger Dick closely.

"By Jove! I like you if you do get me in pickle sometimes," he suddenly exclaimed. "I'd like to help you, bounce me if I wouldn't, but I can't. I'm in a fix to know a good deal, but yet not to give you any assistance. You want to keep on the trail, Dodger. Mebbe you'll strike it rich some time. I guess this is as far as I can go. We won't be enemies, but I'm bound to keep you from getting the best hand in the game if I can. Don't think hard of it, Dodger. Here's my hand on it, anyhow."

There was something in Tony Ted's voice which sent Dick's hand forward like a Jack from the box, and the boy doubles shook cordially over the sidewalk stones.

All at once Ted jerked his hand away, and, with a hasty good-night, sprung aside and disappeared.

"That's a quick shoot," murmured the boy detective. "I see now, more than ever before, that Tony Ted is in the employ of the street giant and his short companion. They've got him in their clutches in some manner, and that is why he can't give me the clew which he certainly holds. Is he not going to them now? I recollect that I once followed the pair to a certain house which I have since ascertained to be their quarters. I'll go to it by a short cut and see what I can."

In another minute the Dodger was some distance from the scene of his encounter with Ted, but he was not following in his young double's wake.

As for Ted he did not stop until he had entered a plainly-furnished room, from a wardrobe in one corner of which he took some clothes, which he exchanged for the sorry-looking ones he wore.

"I look a little better now if I don't feel very good," he chuckled. "I hope it'll be a long time before I have another experience like the one I've just passed through. Hang it all! I more than half wish I could help Dodger Dick, for the whole scheme is against the girl Lucy. But I can't help him, but, on the other hand, I've got to help keep him from finding out too much. This is a queer world. Well, I would call it such at any rate."

When Ted had finished dressing he left the room and hurried from the building.

Ten minutes later he reached another room several squares from his boarding-house. It was quite empty and not lighted up.

"Nobody at home," thought the boy double, dropping into a chair. "I think I've earned a little rest after my adventures. The count or Noxie will show up presently, and then I'll report."

He leaned back in the chair which had ample arms and a soft cushion, and as the table suggested a good foot-rest, he elevated his feet and proceeded to wait.

It was not Tony Ted's intention of going to sleep, but he yielded unconsciously to the wooings of slumber, and before twenty minutes passed he was oblivious to his surroundings.

"Here! what does this mean?"

The voice that spoke was harsh, and the hand that fell upon Ted's shoulder seemed to have the power of a trip-hammer.

The boy double sprang out of the chair with a startling cry, and stared, while he gasped, at the man who had disturbed him.

"Is this the way you report?" continued the man.

"I haven't been here long. I dropped in awhile ago. It can't be late yet, for—"

"No, it's early!" And the speaker caught the close curtain at one of the windows and pulled it aside.

Tony Ted could not keep back a cry. Another day had begun!

CHAPTER XII. TAKEN IN.

"MEBBE you've made a pretty mess of it by sleeping here," continued the disturber of Ted's repose, who was no other than Foxcraft, the City Hercules.

The big man was in no good-humor, and the boy double knew that excuses would not palliate the offense of sleeping on duty; therefore he did not try to offer any more.

Foxcraft listened with lowering brow to Ted's report of his mission to Bessie Bullion's house.

"You must go again," said he in tones of command.

"Back to that den where they try to choke people to death," cried Ted. "I won't go!"

"The girl, Lucy, is there!"

"So you think. I say that a thorough search of the house would not reveal a single trace of her."

Ted spoke with a confidence that impressed the giant.

"Give it one more trial, though, Ted."

"No. I am resolved not to go back to Bessie's. I don't intend to tempt her to make another mistake."

Foxcraft found the boy immovable, and biting his lips vexatiously, he did not press the proposition.

"Mebbe you want to get out of our employ?" he growled, fixing his dark, evil eyes on the boy.

"You wouldn't release me if I did, I reckon," bantered Ted.

Foxcraft laughed.

"No, not just yet," he assured. "We want you to find Lucy for us. After that we will divide and part company."

"I'll find the girl if you'll let me look for her where I think she is."

"Look for her where you please."

A few moments later Tony Ted was on the street again, but this time he did not direct his steps toward the Bowery fortune-teller's.

Foxcraft, who had stealthily followed him to the sidewalk, watched him out of sight, and then went off in the opposite direction.

Ted was soon afterward singled out by a man whose eyes fairly glistened at sight of him, and his hands opened and shut eagerly while he followed the boy double with the stealth of a cheetah.

"Will wonders never cease?" exclaimed this individual, watching Ted. "Fortune has thrown this young spy across my path, and I'm a chump if I don't fix him for good. No more attempts to keep my game in Bess Bullion's cage. The dock ferret, Dodger Dick, got away last night, because she didn't keep him secure, of course. I'll attend to this street weasel myself. I guess I'm equal to the occasion."

The boy double was followed by this man until he brought up in front of a plain two story brick house.

"What does he want there?" muttered the trailer as Ted handled the knocker and was answered by a good-looking elderly woman who asked him in a pleasant voice what he wanted.

"I would like to see the young lady here," answered Ted.

The woman started.

"The young lady? Haven't you reached the wrong house?"

"Oh, no," replied the boy with a light smile. "I have some important business with Miss Lucy Lukens, and—"

"I will see the boy," broke in a sweet voice, and Ted heard the rustle of female garments as a young girl came down a flight of steps into the hall.

The woman stepped back and left the two together.

"You are Miss Lukens?" asked Ted, though he knew he stood in the presence of Norris Gibbs's ward.

"I am."

"Shall we talk here?" and Ted looked around suspiciously.

"No. Come into the parlor."

The boy was ushered into a room at the side of the hall, and the young girl turned to him with a face full of expectancy.

"I've been looking up that mysterious robbery at Norris Gibbs's," began Ted.

Lucy smiled.

"Well, what have you discovered, my boy?" she asked. "Not very much, I presume, if the affair has baffled the efforts of some of the best detectives of New York. Do you think I can give you a clew?"

"I don't know. We get clews sometimes where we least expect to find any. You were at home when the robbery took place?"

"Yes."

"Would you mind telling me what you saw?" Lucy Lukens looked searchingly at Ted a few seconds, and then replied.

"Are you playing detective, or do you profess to know something about the business of discovering crime?"

"I'm no Captain Coldgrip—I guess he's the best sleuth in the city now—but I do profess to know something about catching men who violate the law. My name is Ted Tompkins, and I would like to hear your version of the robbery."

"I am very sorry, Mr. Tompkins, but I cannot oblige you with my story," was the answer. "Don't you want the robbers hunted down?"

"That will be done in time."

"Not by any of the cops who are beating the bush for them now!" cried Ted. "You mean by your answer that you know something, but that you don't intend to give it out to Ted Tompkins. I've met with several such cases before."

The boy double picked up his hat as he finished, and said, in an apologetic tone that he was sorry he had disturbed Lucy.

"Do you think you would get the five thousand dollars offered as a reward by Norris Gibbs if you should discover the criminals?" she asked, quickly, her face aglow with a merriment which Ted could not understand.

"I don't see why I would not," returned the boy. "He is very anxious to get the robbers and the important papers they carried off. By the way, Miss Lukens, those papers are said to be worth a good deal to you."

Ted thought the young girl started slightly over his last words.

"Who told you so?" asked Lucy.

"We detectives understand it that way."

"Yes, those documents do concern me, but," with another pleasant smile, "I suppose I can live without them."

"Don't you care whether they come back or not?"

"I would like to have them."

"But you don't want to give a detective any information," laughed Ted. "It's all very funny to me, Miss Lukens, but perhaps you know just why you withhold your testimony. I'll go ahead anyhow, and if I succeed, and I never fail, mind you, I'm afraid it will not be by your help."

Ted ended his speech at the door and walked into the hall, followed by Lucy, whose face had again one of those inexplicable smiles.

"Call me a gudgeon if she isn't a puzzle," ejaculated the boy double when he had been dismissed at the door with a cheery "good-morning." "She goes just so far and no further. She isn't going to be drawn out by any play of mine. I've found her, though, and that's what I came for. I told Foxcraft she wasn't under Bessie Bullion's roof, and because he insisted that she was I almost got my walking papers from the delights of this world."

Nearly opposite the house where Tony Ted had found Lucy, a man had lurked during the interview just witnessed.

He did not appear to be a spy, yet his movements denoted that he had not happened there.

The large trunks of the shade-trees hid him from view, and he watched Lucy's new home, with unwearied eye until the door opened to let Ted out.

At that moment he caught a glimpse of the young girl's face, and let out a cry of exultation.

"Found at last, my young chit!" he exclaimed.

"I wouldn't make a bad detective if I took a notion to go into the business. The people in your house are the friends you spoke of during your visit to my office. Stay there till we want you. It won't be very long." And the speaker glided away and followed nimble-footed Ted.

The boy, all unconscious of the espionage, kept on until he struck Union Square.

The man was close behind him.

"Maybe he intends to peep into my office," suddenly cried the tracker. "I'd give my head almost if he would take a notion of that kind. You will be welcome, boy, if you make the call, and I promise that I won't keep you waiting."

Ted crossed the Square and struck the pavement almost directly beneath the windows of Chubb Copeland's law office.

All at once he threw a look up at the building and his eyes got a quick glitter.

By this time the man who had followed him was at his heels.

"I have no business up there just now," murmured Ted. "I wonder, though, if the old law-shark has an idea who manipulated his combination lock while he dreamed of millions a few feet away! I guess not, though he's cunning in court affairs. I could send you to Sing Sing, Lawyer Chubb. Mebbe you'll get there anyhow."

Ted was about to quit the spot, indeed he had taken a step forward, when he was touched by a hand that closed on his arm.

"Not so fast!" said a voice as he turned and looked into the face of the Union Square lawyer himself. "I want to see you up-stairs on a little business."

Ted shrunk away involuntarily, but Chubb Copeland's grip did not relax.

"It won't take us long," continued he. "My business is very important, and you will say so when I broach it. I'm just up-stairs here, second floor."

The boy double was walked toward the open hallway with a force which he could not resist, and almost before he recovered his thoughts he was half-way up the steps with the lawyer.

"I'll see the thing through, but it looks like I had to whether I like it or not," passed through Ted's mind. "Chubb Copeland will find out that I'm a hot iron which he'll be glad to drop."

A moment afterward the broker's lawyer opened the door of his office and escorted Ted across the floor.

"Take that chair," he said, seating the boy in a large arm-chair at the table, while he reached toward the nearest drawer.

The dock spy's double wondered what was coming next, but he soon found out.

All at once Copeland's hand left the table, and something glittered before Ted's eyes, and then clicked.

It was not a revolver, as the astonished boy could see, for revolvers do not possess flexible clasps.

"Now, my young thief, what have you done with the papers you took from my safe?" asked the lawyer, settling back in the chair in front of Ted.

The boy made no answer. He could move his head and his feet, but his arms had been secured to the chair by a contrivance from which there was no escape.

It had been the work of a second, and the triumphant glare which lit up the rascally lawyer's eyes told Ted how pleased he was with his diabolical success.

CHAPTER XIII.

DODGER DICK'S THUNDERBOLT.

DODGER DICK, who had effected his escape from Bess Bullion's house in time to save himself from the vengeance of the female "fence," was eager to get back to the exciting trail he had been following.

We left him last, as the reader will recollect, on his way to the quarters frequented by Foxcraft and his partner Noxie, and shortly after his street interview with Tony Ted, his young double.

Finding nothing that promised to reward him on the trip, the dock spy set off in another direction.

Not long afterward he reached the near vicinity of Norris Gibbs's house.

Despite the lateness of the hour, a light was burning in the second story front room which he knew was frequented by the broker, and for some time he watched the house from a convenient cover.

All at once the door of the house opened and a young man tripped lightly down the steps and made off up the street.

"That is my fellow!" cried Dick, quitting his post at once and following the pedestrian. "I think I know enough of him to play a hand he isn't looking for."

Dick continued to follow the young man until he entered one of the city squares and took a seat on a bench as near the center as it could be.

"There's going to be a meeting of some kind," thought the Dodger. "Let me see if I can't get to hear something important. I'm out for that purpose to-night."

Passing to the rear of the bench the boy spotter approached the youth cautiously, and at last he dropped to the ground and half-crouched against a bush which had not yet shed its heavy foliage.

For some time the occupant of the seat was not joined by any one.

He lit a cigar and appeared to enjoy it while he waited.

Dick could not see his face, but his restless movements told him that he was anxious and impatient.

At last a person came up who looked around, and then dropped to a seat beside the waiter on the bench.

"Have I kept you waiting?" asked the newcomer.

"Not very long."

"We can't always be on time."

"Of course not."

A slight pause.

"How much have you brought me to-night?" was the stranger's interrogative.

"Not as much as you would like, perhaps," and the young man drew something from his pocket and extended it toward his companion.

"What news from the girl?" asked the man who took the money, for money the article undoubtedly was.

"We have no news from her."

"Aren't they looking for her?"

"They are."

"The police?"

"No."

"Who is the man-hunter?"

"Chubb Copeland, the lawyer."

"That shrewd but foolish fellow?" was the rejoinder, accompanied by a laugh.

"He's pretty smart, I think, and not much of a fool either when he wants to help himself to a fortune."

"Maybe not. What do you think of the hush-money scheme?"

"I hardly know what to say."

"They will not be exposed?"

"No."

"But they might not think we had the proof, isn't that what holds you back?"

"I confess that it is."

"Then let me remove your scruples. You need not go back to Norris Gibbs. I will go in your place, and he will have to pay a good round sum to get rid of me."

"When would you go?"

"To-morrow some time—say at two in the afternoon."

"He is at home at that hour, but—"

"Well, what is it?"

"Something unexpected has happened."

"To Norris Gibbs?"

"Yes."

"How does it affect him?"

"It casts him down. He has lost something of value, and within the last forty-eight hours, too."

"Something besides Lucy?"

"Yes."

"Maybe the fox has been robbed by the weasel," laughed the young man's companion.

"I think that is the case. In truth, I heard him tell Lawyer Copeland to-day that if he knew where the papers were he would feel easy."

"That is it! The robbers have been robbed! It gives me a firm hold on him, and I can strike him for a thousand to-morrow. He has that much always in the house?"

"Ten times that amount."

"It is settled. I will do it. Here is a harvest for us, my boy. We know what none of the detectives of New York suspect. We know who robbed Norris Gibbs, and for what. You need not go back until after my visit. He does not suspect you. He knows that you discovered him tied in the chair the morning after the robbery, and of course he isn't going to incur your resentment by accusing you of treachery. You are safe, Robert, and we can make a splendid raise without lowering you in Norris Gibbs's estimation. You can go down to the hotel if you want. I shall not see you again till after the visit."

"For fortune's sake don't overdo the thing, Russell."

"When did I ever do it that way?"

"Never."

"I thought so."

The two men rose and left the bench, leaving Dodger Dick, who had overheard all in the dark shadow of the protecting bush.

As they moved off, the boy kept them in sight until they separated, when he followed the young man, who led him to a small hotel on Eighth avenue.

"So Bob Blandy is playing double, is he?" exclaimed Dodger Dick. "He keeps in Norris Gibbs's good graces while he associates with Russell Ralph, one of the coolest and shrewdest black-mailers in New York. This is the game that is to be played: Russell is going to the broker's house to-morrow and intimate that he

knows the truth concerning the great robbery. Bob Blandy has given him pointers enough to tell him exactly how to proceed. The black-mailing rascal will demand and probably get one thousand dollars. If the papers that were taken from the broker's safe that night have been lost the second time, he may try to negotiate for their return. I see how the police of New York have been deceived, and why Norris Gibbs put forth the tempting offer of five thousand dollars reward. It is the shrewdest game I ever saw played, and all to cheat Lucy Luckens out of her own. Maybe the scheme will miscarry. I don't know but that it will."

Instead of quitting the hotel to which he had tracked the young man who had employment at Norris Gibbs's house as a private secretary, he boldly entered and asked for Bob Blandy.

"He has just gone to his room," answered the clerk.

"I have business with him."

"You, boy?" and the speaker stared over the desk at Dick, who did not look like a messenger-boy, but for all appeared above the run of New York street youth.

"Is your business very pressing?" asked the clerk.

"It is."

"Then go up to number twenty-three, second floor. Mr. Blandy cannot have retired yet. I will take the responsibility of disturbing him if your business must be transacted before he retires."

Dodger Dick did not hear the last words, for he was already on the steps, and a minute afterward he rapped on the door of room twenty-three.

"Come in," said a voice on the inside, and the boy ferret opened the door to see a young man half undressed and with some wonderment in his eyes.

"Excuse this late call," Dick said, as he went forward. "I think I have good news for you and your employer, Mr. Gibbs."

A slight start on Bob's part did not pass unnoticed by the boy.

"I think I have traced the missing papers up," continued the Dodger.

"You do, eh?" and then the young man changed color, as if he had discovered that he was proceeding a little too fast. "Let me ask to what papers you refer?"

Dick could scarcely suppress a smile.

"Why, to the documents carried off by the men who tied Norris Gibbs in his chair and then robbed him."

"I understand now. But, in the first place, who are you?"

"I'm Richard Sly, one of the many who want to pocket the reward offered for the robbers and the papers."

"A boy sleuth, hey?"

"Perhaps."

"Well, go ahead, Mr. Sly. What can I do for you?"

"I thought you would like to hear the news."

Bob Blandy looked disappointed.

"Was this all?"

"You understand that the reward is to be paid for the robbers and the papers and not for either," he suddenly resumed, looking searchingly at Dick.

"I know how it is. Now, Mr. Blandy, what can you guarantee me for the documents?"

"I am not their owner," responded the young man, quickly.

"Certainly not, but I thought I might deal with Mr. Gibbs through you. The truth is, I was rather roughly treated by your master when I went to his library to get some information the day after the event, and I prefer to deal with a gentleman."

Dodger Dick spoke with a spirit that caught the young man who listened.

"Of course it would be pleasant for you to restore the stolen papers to Norris Gibbs," Dick went on. "I fancy it would lift you a step in the broker's estimation."

"When can you get them?" cried Bob Blandy.

Dodger Dick drew slightly back from the eager young man who was leaning forward with a new light in his eyes.

"Oh, I can touch them within the next twenty-four hours perhaps," was the answer.

"Not sooner than that?"

"I can try."

"The sooner the better."

Dodger Dick threw a look toward the door which he had left open an inch.

"In return for those papers, Mr. Bob Blandy, would you be willing to tell me all you saw in Norris Gibbs's house after sundown on the night of the robbery and before six o'clock of the next day?" he asked.

In an instant the young man recoiled and his face got ghostly in the gaslight.

"What do you mean to insinuate?" he cried, but the sentence was spoken in gasps.

"Only this," and Dodger Dick looked the youth steadily in the eye. "You have assisted in one of the meanest schemes of robbery and fraud that ever took place in New York. Not only that, but you have just consented to help Russell Ralph, the money leech, to blackmail the man who has befriended you. Now, I want the truth out of you, or you go up the river for a dozen years."

The private secretary was spellbound.

CHAPTER XIV.

TOLD UNDER PROTEST.

THE young wharf spy detective could not have schemed a more direct blow than the one he had just delivered.

Bob Blandy was a young man who had fallen into evil ways, and the mere intimation that they had been found out was enough to blanch his cheek.

Therefore, he nearly lost his head when Dick coolly threatened him with a term in Sing Sing if he did not tell the truth about the Gibbs robbery.

"What is it you want to know?" stammered Bob, when he partially found his tongue though his paleness had not abated one jot.

"You are ready to talk, then?"

"Perhaps; but I am in the dark as to your wishes."

"I want to know something about the Gibbs case," resumed the boy. "You are the person who is said to have discovered the broker tied and gagged in the chair the morning after."

The young man acknowledged the words with a bow.

"At what hour did you find Norris Gibbs in that situation?"

"About five o'clock."

"At five o'clock, and the alarm did not get out of the house till ten?"

There was no answer.

"What kept the news back, Mr. Blandy?"

"An inventory of the contents of the safe. Mr. Gibbs wanted to see exactly what had been carried away."

"Did it take five hours to complete that work?"

Bob Blandy moved uneasily in his chair.

"We wanted to be thorough," he said.

"We?" echoed Dick with a smile.

"Yes—Mr. Gibbs and myself."

"Very well. Are you certain that the broker was unconscious when you found him?"

"I have said so to fifty detectives."

"And you repeat the declaration to me? I don't want you to go too fast, Mr. Blandy."

"Well, he may not have been wholly unconscious," snapped the young man, displeased.

"You helped him to a more comfortable position than the chair after you untied him?"

"I did."

"What did he say?"

Bob Blandy started.

"I have just told you—"

"Of course you have—that Mr. Gibbs was unconscious, or nearly so. He spoke to you just after being released."

"Who told you this?" cried the private secretary.

"Not Russell Ralph, you may depend," answered Dick. "You see, Mr. Blandy, I have not been working up this case for nothing. Didn't Norris Gibbs keep you in the library, and give you some instructions about your testimony? I want the truth, and I am in a position to demand it."

For several seconds Bob Blandy looked at the boy sleuth with a mixture of wonder and rage, but he saw the keen, dark eye that did not quail, and felt that Dick's last words meant their full measure.

"What is to follow this interview?" he asked, cooling down, for he was at one time ready to break forth in a flat refusal and stand the consequences.

"I cannot say," replied the Dodger.

"Am I to be arrested and held as a witness against Norris Gibbs?"

"I think not."

"Give me your word that this will not take place."

"No," spoke Dick firmly. "If you refuse to tell me the truth, I shall proceed as best suits my purpose. Shall I bid you good night at this juncture, Mr. Bob Blandy?"

The boy slowly left his chair, but with his eyes still riveted on the unwilling witness.

"I have not refused to humor you."

"But you want to keep something back. Good-night."

The adieu was couched in tones that drew the young man from his chair, and Dick, with an expectant twinkle in his eye, was halted halfway between the private secretary and the door.

"I won't be dragged to the witness-stand," cried Bob Blandy, and the boy spotter turned and waited quietly for him to proceed. "I see that you know more than I suspected about certain occurrences in Norris Gibbs's house. We might effect a compromise."

Dick came back and took the chair he had just vacated.

"Go on," said he. "Tell me the whole story, Mr. Blandy. Nothing else will keep me from playing a hand that will not be a pleasant one for you to contemplate."

The young man seemed to collect his thoughts, and to take in a full breath.

"I was in Mr. Gibbs's house the night the theft took place," he began. "I have a room across the hall from his, and there I spend a part of my time when I am not employed in the library. My employment as the broker's amanuensis has given me a deep insight into his affairs; in fact, I understand them as well as he does himself."

"On the night we are talking about Norris Gibbs approached me cautiously and asked if I would assist him in a little play which had to be made to keep him from impending financial ruin. I readily consented, but did not dream what that play was to be. Not long afterward Chubb Copeland, his attorney, dropped in, evidently by appointment, and Mr. Gibbs told him that I was all right. A short time after this I left the library, and at my employer's request came back at half-past twelve o'clock. Then I was initiated into the whole scheme."

"It was to be pretended that Norris Gibbs had been visited by two masked men and robbed of considerable money and a lot of valuable papers. In order to carry out this belief, Lawyer Copeland produced a curious device for fastening a man to a chair. It was so arranged that the victim could be secured in a minute and held fast beyond the possibility of escape or of raising an alarm of any kind. Gibbs and I were instructed in the use of the invention, and shortly after my return to the library the lawyer went away."

"I believe that he carried with him the papers which had been kept in the safe, but which were not there the following day. Mr. Gibbs and I occupied the library together until near day when, after I had helped to secure him in the chair with the strange device, I went to my room to await the time when I was to give the alarm."

A faint smile came out on Bob Blandy's face when he reached this point in his narrative.

"The whole scheme worked well," he resumed, "though Mr. Gibbs objected to having a gag in his mouth. If he had refused altogether the suspicions of the police would have been aroused, for his mouth was examined and unmistakable evidence of the gag found. The five-thousand-dollar-reward offer was put out for the purpose of further deceiving the people, for the papers had merely passed from Norris Gibbs's hands into those of his lawyer, and the money carried off was no sum at all. There," finished the young man with a look of relief, "the whole narrative has been told. You see I have gone into details, keeping nothing back."

A moment's silence passed between Dick and the private secretary.

"What finally became of the papers?"

"Which ones?—there were two sets taken from the safe."

"I mean the packet belonging to the girl Lucy."

"I guess they didn't stay in Caubb Copeland's hands long."

"How did he lose them?"

"From what I gathered from a certain conversation between the two men, those papers were lately stolen from the safe in the lawyer's office."

"Who is suspected of that theft?"

"A boy."

Dodger Dick gave vent to an expression of surprise.

"The lawyer strongly suspects the boy, who is believed to be in league with two men who want the papers for a certain purpose," resumed Bob Blandy.

"Where is Lucy?"

"I don't know."

"Does Norris Gibbs?"

"No."

"Nor the lawyer?"

"No."

"I guess that's all, Mr. Blandy," remarked

Dick. "You have given me what I believe to be a truthful narrative of the Gibbs robbery, which is a pretty deep puzzle to the police."

"Don't they even suspect the truth?" asked the young man, with a smile.

"I think not," was the reply.

"I'd like to know how you got onto it."

Dodger Dick gave the private secretary a smile in return, but did not proceed to enlighten him.

"What a fool I've been," burst from Bob Blandy's throat, when he heard the retreating footsteps of Dodger Dick in the corridor beyond his room. "Here I've gone and given the whole thing away to a boy, just because he frightened me with a threat of Sing Sing. What can he do? A man can't be made to go on the stand and criminate himself. I should have waited till I got my second breath. Let me see. Did I tell him everything? Yes, even to the supposed robbery of Chubb Copeland's safe. He's a cute one, that boy is. And I, like a chump, have let him scare something worth a good deal of money out of my possession. Bounce me, if I don't deserve to go up the river for this display of foolishness!"

Meantime Dodger Dick had left the little hotel, and was making off with the results of his shrewd play.

"There is one important thing to be done, and that is to discover the papers which Chubb Copeland lost. They are Lucy Lukens's fortune, and without them the game cannot be won. The scheme worked pretty well until the boy tapped the lawyer's safe and carried off the prize. I see that my double can play some very shrewd hands, and I have to exercise all my wits if I want to trip him. He told me enough to know that he is in the employ of the two pards, Foxcraft and Noxie, who are after a good deal more than the five thousand dollar reward. Will they get it?"

Dick was moving rapidly over the sidewalk while his thoughts assumed this shape, but he did not know that Foxcraft, the City Hercules, had sighted him, and was keeping him in sight with the keenness of the greyhound.

CHAPTER XV.

A CLOSE SHAVE.

To be watched by a man like Ferdinand Foxcraft boded the watched person no good.

The city giant and his stout little partner Noxie had a pet scheme like a good many other people.

A part of that scheme they had already carried out, for, as the reader knows, certain papers considered of great value by the pair were at that very moment concealed beneath the floor of their quarters.

Foxcraft had reasons for suspecting Dodger Dick, else he would not have followed him with a sleuth's pertinacity up one street and down another after the young shadow's interview with Bob Blandy.

All at once the Dodger disappeared, and the City Hercules reached the end of his spin when he thought himself hot on the trail.

"Confound the boy!" growled Foxcraft. "No doubt he's up to such tricks, but he could not have known that I was at his heels. I don't like this at all, but what can I do?"

Foxcraft after awhile was obliged to turn back, for his glances failed to rediscover Dick, and when he walked off it was in no pleasant humor.

Dodger Dick had merely stepped into a place where he was well known, and, in order to throw off any one who might be on the trail, he had passed through to the next street where he resumed his walk.

This is an old trick worn quite threadbare the world over; but it fooled Foxcraft as completely as though it had been an original play.

The information wormed from the private secretary by subtle threats and good playing had thrown Dodger Dick into a pleasant frame of mind.

He had gained an important point, picked up a valuable link in the chain as it were.

For several days Dick had not been to the old home, or Mother Sturgeon's house, and he now went back to it.

"I guess you've found a clew to something, Dickey," said the old lady, noticing the telltale gleam in his eyes.

"Truth to tell, I have, mother," was the answer.

"Well, I have something for you."

"What is it?"

The woman unlocked a drawer in her plain little work-table and took out a small envelope.

Dick broke the seal immediately and glanced quickly at the contents of the sheet of paper he drew forth.

"Ho, ho!" he cried under his breath as he raised his head and caught Mother Sturgeon's eye. "Who brought this up-stairs?"

"A boy not bigger than a minute. He ran in and threw it down on the table saying: 'That's for Mr. Dick,' then bounced out again and disappeared. Is it important?"

"I think so."

Dick put the message away and made a change of clothes.

"I'm going out," he went on in response to Mother Sturgeon's inquisitive stare.

"On the trail?"

"Maybe so."

At the foot of the stair and just before he stepped out upon the street, Dick found himself face to face with a man who immediately addressed him.

"I've been waiting for you," the man said.

The light was dim, but Dick could see that the speaker was well built, especially about the chest, and that he had a keen, piercing look.

"You want me, eh? I am at your service," replied the young sleuth.

"You are Dick the Dock Ferret, are you not?"

"I am called such."

"Then I have made no mistake. I've been unfortunate. A large sum of money has been taken from me since dark, and I want to give you all the clews I have to the thief."

"Why not some one else? It isn't far to the headquarters on Mulberry street."

"Hang Mulberry street!" exclaimed the man.

"I guess I know whom I want, and that's what fetched me here. I live about three squares from this place. My name is Francis. Come along, and I'll show you something to begin on."

Almost mechanically Dodger Dick followed the man out upon the pavement.

The latter talked all the while.

"If you've got another job on hands just now it won't hurt you to see what I've got for you," he continued. "Things are fresh yet on the premises, and now's the time to get your clews—I'm able to pay for good work. I don't want any other kind."

Dodger Dick thought rapidly.

"I can go with this man. I have a good part of the night before me, and I need not stick to the trail like a leech. I think I know where to find my young double when I want him. It was a cute trick he played at Lucy's new home; but he did not get much out of the girl."

The man, who was about forty-five and rather good-looking, escorted the young detective away.

Now and then, in the most natural manner imaginable, he would drop something about the robbery of his apartments, and by the time the two reached a certain house Dick appeared to have all the particulars.

There was nothing left but to view the premises.

"Here we are," the guide said, halting in front of the building while he began to fumble for a latch-key.

"Is this your place?" asked the boy.

"I board up-stairs."

Dick stepped back.

"Not to-night, Mr. Francis," he exclaimed, a bit of sudden discovery lighting up his eyes.

"Thanks, I happen to know this house."

In an instant the man took a quick step forward.

"Keep off!" continued Dick, throwing up his hands like a guard.

"Not altogether, my young shadow!"

No boy, however agile, could have kept the man away.

With a cry something like that which emanates from the throat of a wild beast, he sprang straight at Dick, and gripped him before he could successfully repel an attack.

At the same moment the front door of the house flew open, and a second man rushed forward.

"A little help, Dingle!" exclaimed Francis.

"This young panther is wiry and strong. Take him by the throat there, please."

That was all Dick heard, for he was overcome by a terrible choking sensation, and his last thought was that he was in the hands of two ruffians.

"We'll earn every cent of our money," laughed one of the couple. "If he had not recognized the house, I would have had him inside in another half-minute. I did not think his eyes were so keen."

Dodger Dick in a state of unconsciousness was carried into the building where two hands thrust themselves into his pockets and turned them inside out.

"Hello! what's this?" and one of the men unfolded the message the boy detective had lately received from Mother Sturgeon.

"Read it out, Dingle."

Leaning toward the light the fellow called Dingle read Dick's letter as follows:

"DODGER DICK:—Come to me on receipt of this. Your double has been here trying to make a discovery, but I think he got no news. I am anxious to know how goes the battle, and whether you are making progress. Lucy."

"Lucy is it?" smiled Francis with a puzzled countenance. "I wonder who Lucy is?"

Dingle soberly shook his head.

"Well, never mind. We'll show the letter to our friend. Mebbe she'll want it. Bring up the cab."

One of the men went out leaving the other with Dick.

Twenty minutes passed and then the noise of wheels was heard. Dodger Dick was beginning to come back to himself.

"All's ready," said the voice of Dingle, and Dingle himself showed up at the door.

The next moment a handkerchief was clasped over the boy ferret's mouth, and he was lifted up and borne from the house.

A closed carriage stood in the gutter, and Dodger Dick was carried into it and placed on one of the seats.

Francis entered after him closing the door, and Dingle climbed to the box.

"Make good time," called out the fellow inside, and away went the horses, their shoes striking sparks at the crossings they rapidly made.

Meantime the boy detective's thoughts had come back. There was a hand at one of his wrists, and the grip told him that he was still in the clutches of the men who had set a trap for him.

He lay quiet and did not inform his companion that he was himself again, but he tried to tell where he was by the lights that were passed by the cab on its journey.

At last the rapid motion of the vehicle ceased, and Dodger Dick felt that he was about to be introduced to the second part of his adventure.

The carriage was guided up to the curbing, and Dingle sprang from the box and appeared at the door.

A second later a cloth was thrown over the boy's face and he was lifted from the seat.

"All's clear," he heard some one whisper, as the night air penetrated to his cheeks. "Take him right in to Bess."

The name sent a nameless thrill through every fiber of the boy spotter's frame.

Bess!

Was he coming back to the fortune-teller of the Bowery—back to the trap from which he had but lately escaped?

With the vengeful fingers of Bess Bullion at his throat again, would he ever get back to the trail he was following with success?

Dodger Dick realized his situation in the fullest sense of the term.

It was but a step from the gutter to the door of the house in front of which the vehicle had stopped, and the Dodger was carried forward.

"Now or never!" thought Dick. "Am I in trim to give these tools of Bowery Bess the slip? I can try."

The following moment he actually jumped from the ruffian's arms, and before either of the twain could recover, he was off like a young deer.

"Heavens! between cup and lip!" growled Dingle.

CHAPTER XVI.

TIMELY INTERFERENCE.

WHEN Chubb Copeland, the lawyer, had succeeded in dragging Tony Ted, the Boy Double, into his office from the street, he inwardly congratulated himself on what he called his good fortune.

He had no doubt that he had caught the person who, despite the combination, had despoiled his safe, taking off the valuable papers for which the best detectives of the city were still looking.

Moreover, he had discovered Lucy's hiding-place which he believed was also the home of her lover, a young man whose suit had never met with Norris Gibbs's approval.

"Let me finish with this boy first, and then I'll attend to the runaway," thought Copeland, as Ted sat before him fastened to the chair by the contrivance which he had clapped to his arms. "He must tell me where the papers are, or his future liberty may be sorely abridged."

As for Ted, he looked coolly at the lawyer and waited for him to show his hand.

"Oh, you can't jump up and run away," suddenly laughed Copeland, glancing at Ted's hands. "If you think you can, just try it."

But the boy did not.

"You've been here before?" continued the broker's attorney.

"I, Mr. Copeland?" responded the boy with an innocent air.

"You! Come, don't try the innocent dodge. It won't work with me. I can tell you that. You were here when I was not in a condition to protect my property. You took papers from that safe."

The semblance of a smile appeared at the corners of the boy shadow's mouth.

"Where are they, boy?" asked Copeland.

"Where are what?"

"My papers."

"What were they like?"

The boy's question startled the cunning lawyer.

"Never mind. You can answer the question yourself no doubt. I want a direct reply; no slipping out of it like an eel out of a fellow's hand. Now, proceed."

The lawyer put on an air of determination and leaned back in his chair with his cold dark eyes fixed on the boy.

"You have a cool way of arresting a person," said Ted. "I might have asked for your authority, but I would have got no satisfaction. I am accused of opening your safe and taking out something of value to you. Don't you lock your safe, Mr. Copeland?"

"I do," answered the lawyer biting his lip.

"A combination lock, eh?"

"Yes."

"I'd like to know how I could get in," and the boy double burst into a little laugh. "Do you talk in your sleep, or, perhaps you paste the combination on the safe door?"

"I'm no chump!" vociferated Copeland. "Nobody ever pasted his safe combination up like a bill of sale. You got beyond the door of my treasury."

"When?"

The boy was aggravating, and it was evident that the New York lawyer was rapidly losing his temper.

"Great Scott, boy. If I knew when, I wouldn't be here asking these questions and demanding my property," he cried. "I give you just two minutes in which to decide what to do." And he took out his watch and opened it in the palm of his hand.

Tony Ted watched him with a peculiar look not at all indicative of fear.

He was near enough to hear the watch tick the seconds off, and he could have followed them almost in his mind.

All at once there came a rap at the door, a rap so sudden and distinct that Chubb Copeland seemed to be lifted from his chair by it.

"Silence!" he whispered, leaning toward Ted.

The next second the rap was repeated a little more emphatic than before, but not the least reply was given to it.

The lawyer wanted no visitors just then.

"He'll go away in a moment," thought Copeland. "I think it is Gibbs himself, but I can't afford to run the risk of opening the door. Let him call some other time."

There were no indications of the caller going off without some more persistent efforts to get into the office.

He rapped again.

"Must think I'm here," ejaculated the law-shark. "Acts like he's bound to interrupt the business I have on hand. Well, he'll do nothing of the kind."

At that moment a loud "ahem!" sprang from Tony Ted's throat, and in a flash the wrath of a lifetime seemed to leap from the lawyer's eyes.

"You young rascal, I ought to choke you to death!" grated Copeland, darting toward the boy, whose act had not been performed without deliberation. "You've betrayed my presence here with the hope of effecting your own release. Precious little capital you'll get out of the scheme."

Rage had crimsoned the lawyer's face, and his hands fairly trembled.

Again the summons sounded at the door, and a voice beyond it commanded Copeland to

"open up."

Growling out something, he left his chair and went forward.

"I have a client with me just now," said he, with his lips close to the door and speaking to the party outside.

"Why didn't you answer before? A client, eh? Maybe we want to see him too. Open the door, please, Mr. Copeland."

In a moment it seemed to dawn on the lawyer's mind that he had a policeman for a visitor.

The voice and the words indicated this.

"In a moment, sir!" responded Copeland, stepping back.

He leaned over his boy prisoner and jerked off the apparatus that held him to the chair.

"Keep a still tongue in your head or it'll be the worse for you," he whispered in threatening voice. "I know enough to lock prison doors on you, and Chubb Copeland plays no boys' games!"

Then he went back to the door, and opening it, found himself face to face with a tall, broad-shouldered man, to whom he began to apologize for keeping him out so long.

A smile lit up the man's eyes when his look fell upon the boy double who had turned and was gazing at him with mingled delight and curiosity.

"A kid client, I see," observed the visitor, with a glance toward Copeland. "Well, I presume you lawyers have all kinds."

"We have," was the answer.

Ted could hardly hold his tongue. He wanted to protest against being classed with Chubb Copeland's clients, but a lucky thought admonished him to keep quiet for the present.

"I understand that you have been robbed," suddenly resumed the tall man.

"Sir?" cried the lawyer, coloring. "Robbed? I don't see how that impression got out."

"They get out just the same. I am Halford Hall, private detective, and I pick up information everywhere. It's my business," he added, with a smile.

"But, sir," the lawyer said, with unblushing effrontery, "I have not been robbed."

"Indeed? Beg your pardon, then. I make it a point to follow up reports of this kind. If you should ever need the services of a detective, don't forget Halford Hall," and a small white card fell on the table like a snowflake.

Chubb Copeland felt vastly relieved.

"Good-night, sir," the private detective went on. "You can go back to your client, and I beg your pardon again for interrupting you."

"No trouble at all," answered Copeland, rejoicing that matters were not worse. "I'll not forget you, Mr. Hall, should I ever need the services of a gentleman of your profession. Just now—"

It was Ted's leaving the chair that broke the lawyer's sentence.

"Sit down, boy," exclaimed Copeland.

"No, thank you. I have business outside," and Dodger Dick's Double was at the door before he could be detained.

Chubb Copeland was forced to submit to this, and the following second he saw his young prisoner vanish, and heard his rapid footsteps on the stairs that led to the sidewalk below.

"I wish that sneaking detective had been in Halifax!" cried the lawyer when his unwelcome visitor had withdrawn and left him alone. "I had the young thief just where I wanted him, and was about to get the truth out of him when who should spoil it all but one of those ferrets who creep about looking for a job? I caught the right boy—there's no doubt of that—and I had him completely in my hands. Confound it! the bird has got back to the bush. Who intimated to Halford Hall that I have been robbed? I'd like to know that. But those fellows have many ways of getting news. Some of them stand in with the crooks and make money by it. I believe him to be one of this sort."

Speculating with an empty chair before him, and with the bird flown, did not add to Chubb Copeland's enjoyment.

He was no nearer the missing property than before, and he once more roundly abused the private detective for his interference.

"Oh, well, I know where the girl is anyhow," he cried, consolingly. "The big man and his pigmy pard may keep the boy crook in their employ, but it will do them no good. The papers are worth nothing to them without the girl. And they sha'n't get both into their clutches."

Then Chubb Copeland proceeded to quit the office which he did, carefully locking the door behind him and going down to the street with eyes on the alert.

He walked rapidly away and did not stop until he had been admitted to a certain house on the Bowery.

"Would you like to have a boarder, Bess?" he asked the woman who faced him with singular flashes leaping up and then dying in the depths of her eyes.

"No! No more boarders of the kind you bring," she exclaimed.

"But it may be a young lady this time."

"No, I say," and the fortune-teller of the Bowery leaned toward the Union Square law-

yer with her hands tightly clinched. "You can't hold these city eels nohow," she went on. "I had one of 'em at my door awhile ago, but he got away, and that when he was thought to be unconscious. No, Chubb Copeland, I take no more boarders. Take your victims elsewhere. I don't want to get into trouble along with you or no one else."

CHAPTER XVII.

TONY TED CUTS LOOSE.

THERE was a very private consultation at Norris Gibbs's house bright and early the next day.

It was had by two important characters of our story—Copeland, the lawyer, and the broker himself.

Copeland told Gibbs that he thought he had a certain clew to the documents that had been taken from his office safe, and the broker urged him to follow it up and obtain them by all means.

"What about the girl, Lucy?" eagerly questioned Gibbs.

"She's nothing to catch," answered Copeland, smiling at thought of the discovery he had made concerning Lucy's whereabouts. "But had we not better get the papers first?"

"If we can."

"I have but to watch the movements of a certain boy a little while."

"A boy?"

"Yes, the gutter rat who picked my safe combination in a manner most mysterious to me. I've got onto him and his motive, and I won't fail either."

"For fortune's sake do not."

"The police are still completely baffled. I never saw anything like it."

"What chumps they are to be sure!" and Gibbs laughed and took up a fresh cigar.

"Without proof that we did the work nobody will believe Lucy if she attempts to fight us. Her lover may urge her to assert her rights, but I would soon show up the interest he has in the manner and that would cook his goose. You want to run the documents down. That done, we can play the last card and laugh at the foe. Don't you see, Copeland?"

The lawyer replied that he was thoroughly acquainted with the situation, and when he left Norris Gibbs, it was with an assurance that he would have the missing documents within the next forty-eight hours.

On the afternoon of that same day Dodger Dick, while watching two men sauntering through the Bowery with their heads close together, was gently touched on the arm by some one who came up from behind, and a moment later his eyes grew bright at sight of his young double.

"I guess you're not looking for a chick, like me," began Ted, smiling.

Dick acknowledged that he was not.

"What progress have you made?"

And Tony Ted drew nearer and lowered his voice as he assumed an important air.

"I'd be quite likely to tell you, wouldn't I?" bantered the Dodger. "We don't communicate with the enemy in time of war."

At first the boy double showed signs of resentment, but the cloud soon left his face and his eyes got a twinkle of jolly good nature.

"So I'm 'the enemy,' I presume," he exclaimed, drawing back a step. "Do I look very formidable, Dodger Dick?"

"Not very, Ted."

"Let's form an alliance."

The Dodger stared at his double and could not believe that he was in earnest.

"I don't think I want help, Tony Ted," said he.

"Are you that near the prize, or have you given up the chase?"

"I am still on the trail and as for being close to the quarry—that is a matter of my own concern which you understand."

"All right. By the way, the two pards you were shadowing when I came up have got out of sight."

Dick threw a quick look in the direction of the center of the street where the identical men were just boarding a Bowery car.

Ted caught sight of them at the same moment.

"Let them go," he cried, holding Dick back as he was about to rush away. "They'd do you no good now if you were to keep at their heels. You reject my proposition, then?"

"For an alliance?"

"Yes."

"You are not in earnest, Tony Ted."

A smile wreathed the lips of the boy double.

"I was never more in earnest," was the reply. "I am loose-footed now."

"In what way?"

"I am in no man's employ. I have cut loose from the two pards, and they know that they can command me no longer."

"From Foxcraft and Noxie?" cried Dick.

"From giant and pigmy."

There was candor in the boy double's tones.

"We are near my quarters. Let us go to them," he went on.

Three minutes afterward the two boys were the occupants of a small back room on the second floor of a cheap boarding-house, and Tony Ted was talking rapidly.

"I couldn't bear Ferdinand Foxcraft's insolence any longer," he remarked. "I never learned what they were really after until, under their instructions, I paid a visit to Chubb Copeland's office and got into his safe."

Dodger Dick could not keep back an ejaculation of surprise.

"How did you get onto the combination?" he exclaimed.

"I did not get onto it at all. When Chubb Copeland shut his safe that night a bit of paper got between the doors somehow, and he thought he had it locked when he went to bed. It is an old safe and has been in use a good many years. All this was very fortunate for me, for, if it had not been so, I would not have seen the inside of that treasury. I got just what I was sent after though—the papers which were taken from Norris Gibbs's house on the night of the so-called mysterious burglary. I delivered them over to the two pards, my employers."

"And they have them now?"

"Yes."

"What is their game?"

"Of course they have never told me, but the links I've picked up now and then form a pretty conclusive chain. Foxcraft is Lucy Lukens's own uncle, and that's how he came to know so much about the girl. The papers in the case are those which Lucy's father left in trust to Norris Gibbs. They are deeds and bonds, but the broker has made way with a good deal of her property. Lucy was to have had those papers on her eighteenth birthday, but they showed rascality too plainly for Norris Gibbs to give them up. Don't you see? If he could lose them he never need pay the girl back, for she does not know how much the documents are worth. Foxcraft and Noxie want those papers. They intend to hold them over Gibbs's head, or use them some other way to enrich themselves—and all at Lucy's expense! By Jericho! Dodger Dick, it is the most infamous scheme against a girl I ever heard of. Count me out if you please, for I won't assist the rascals another minute. They know it, too."

"What do they say?"

"Foxcraft laughed, and said he'd like to know who'd believe a gutter detective. When I told him that the papers would show rascality, he replied that no one knew where they were."

"Is that true?" asked Dick eagerly.

"He thinks it is."

"What do you think?"

"Of course they will try to keep the documents to themselves," answered Ted. "They are playing as cool a hand as Gibbs and his lawyer are. Now, Dodger Dick, what do you say?"

A short silence followed the boy double's last sentence, and then the young dock spy put out his hand with an expression of confidence.

"If you want it, take that hand," said he. "I told you once that we should not be enemies. We've been rival sleuths; but circumstances made us so."

"Certainly," cried Ted, taking the hand. "It won't be to your discredit if I help you a bit at this stage of the game. I'll give you all the honor of the catch."

"I'll take no more than my share."

"I want to pay Lucy Lukens for the wrongs she's endured. I have helped to keep her cheated out of her own, for if Foxcraft and Noxie succeed, she'll never touch a dollar of her fortune. Do you know where the girl is?"

"I've known ever since she left Norris Gibbs," replied Dick, with a smile.

"I have suspected that all along, for every now and then I came across your track on the trail, and I almost knew that some of them could not have been made without communication with Lucy. I propose an expedition now."

"Well?"

"The two pards have gone to a certain part of the city and will be absent several hours from their quarters. This will give us time to take a hunt for the papers."

"Do you think they are there?"

"We can look."

"I am ready."

Not long afterward the young detectives

were on their way to the quarters of the two men.

Every now and then pedestrians, struck with the resemblance between them, would give them glances of astonishment, until Tony Ted broke out into a laugh.

"We'd frighten Mother Sturgeon out of her wits if we were to invade her room without notice."

"But not Bowery Bess, Tony," answered Dick.

"That tigress? No! Ugh! I feel her fingers at my throat whenever I think of the time she mistook me for you. I promise you that she'll not get a chance to repeat that blunder! One of these days, Dodger, we'll get even with the old Jezebel for her kindness."

And at Ted's display of sarcasm, both boys laughed as they turned into the street where their next adventure lay.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RECOVERED.

CHUBB COPELAND left Bess Bullion's domicile somewhat chagrined over his last interview with that woman.

She had flatly refused to take any more "boarders" at his hands, and he was obliged to hunt another place for the one he had in his mind's eye.

This "boarder" was the girl Lucy herself, and the lawyer had concocted a shrewd plan for getting her away from the house in which she had taken refuge after her flight from Norris Gibbs's dwelling.

Lucy would be a dangerous witness against the two rascals if certain arrests took place, and they wanted the girl completely in their power.

Besides his scheme against the girl, the law-sharp had another that looked toward the speedy recovery of the important documents which had been taken from his safe.

As we know, he had promised the broker that he would get possession of them during the next forty-eight hours, and he intended to work to that end.

As we will soon witness the outcome of the lawyer's schemes, let us now go back to the rival detectives whom we left on their way to Foxcraft's quarters, on the most important mission connected with the trail.

"Here we are!" Tony Ted exclaimed as they entered the apartment hired by the Hercules and his pigmy friend. "We will soon see what this room contains."

They had no difficulty in entering the quarters, for Ted, in separating, had kept the key allowed him by the pair.

The search was begun at once, and was prosecuted with vigor.

"Leave nothing uninspected," said Dodger Dick. "This is a hunt for a fortune, and for the righting of the most infamous wrong ever perpetrated in Gotham. It means happiness and ease for Lucy Lukens if we succeed; if we fail, the girl will be persecuted by some of the greatest villains on earth."

With this thought to goad them on, Dick and Ted worked with a will.

The boy double was familiar with the premises, and led the search into some singular quarters.

"I'm afraid we're at the end of the string," at last exclaimed Ted, pausing in the middle of the floor and giving his companion a look of disappointment.

They had looked everywhere, had sounded the walls and inspected the chair-boards for a secret panel.

"They may have the documents with them," suggested the Dodger.

"Not they! Ferd Foxcraft is not going to carry papers of their value on his person. There are pickpockets in New York, and nobody knows it better than the City Hercules."

"Then you think the property to be somewhere in this room?"

"I do."

"Another trial, I say. We must tackle ceiling and floor."

"The floor! the floor!" cried Ted, starting forward as his face brightened. "I recollect seeing Foxcraft rising from the floor in one corner when I once entered this room abruptly. It was in yon corner, too."

The next second the two boys were on the spot designated by Ted's finger, and in a jiffy the carpet was raised for an examination of the floor.

"Look!" cried Dodger Dick, his eyes dilating as he spoke. "The boards have been tampered with here. One has been sawed across, taken out, and replaced."

The dock spy already had his knife in his hands, and while he talked he inserted the blade between the boards and raised the piece that had been sawed through.

With much eagerness Tony Ted thrust his hands into the dark opening thus exposed, and the following second a triumphant cry left his lips.

"At last!" he exclaimed, holding up a large, well-filled envelope while Dodger Dick's eyes snapped with unbounded delight. "There is nothing like perseverance, Dodger Dick. I guess we hold the best hand now, and if we don't keep it may just disaster overtake us."

The board was carefully put back, after which the carpet was returned to its place, and the packet was transferred to Dick's bosom.

"Listen," suddenly whispered Ted, clutching his companion's wrist. "As I live, the pards are coming back."

The words went through Dodger Dick like an arrow.

"No, there is but one man out there," continued Ted. "He is trying to pick the lock. Of course it is neither of the pards."

The two boys stood together for a few moments longer and listened to the manipulations of a picker in the lock.

"He is making headway," whispered the boy double. "We have to find refuge somewhere," and the boys went to the bed in one corner and crept under it, making no noise.

They had no time to spare for their movement had hardly been executed ere the door opened, and the man outside came in.

It was Lawyer Copeland!

After what had already happened, the boy detectives were not surprised to see the Union Square limb of the law in the role of a day burglar.

He was on a very important mission, for if the lost documents were not speedily recovered, the game of fraud and deceit would close disastrously for him.

Shutting the door carefully behind him Chubb Copeland proceeded to search the room in the most minute manner.

Fortunately for the boys, the bed was in the darkest part of the room, and as they had crept back to the wall which they hugged closely while they held their breath, the sharp eyes of the prying attorney failed to reach them.

Copeland gave utterance to several ejaculations of disappointment during the hunt. The furniture yielded nothing, and although he gave the walls and even the floor some attention, he found nothing to reward him for his pains.

"The documents are not here," he growled, giving up the quest at last. "But I'm not going to stop at this. Not by any means! I will run the boy down and choke the secret out of him if I can't get it any other way. I would have it now if Halford Hall, the private detective, had not poked his head into my office when I had the patent clamps on the boy. Just wait till I get another chance!"

Dodger Dick felt a pair of lips at his ear.

"The next time is never going to come for that rascal," said a low voice. "We've got the clamps now, eh, Dodger?"

In another minute the lawyer had taken his figure from the room, and after a while the boys came from their retreat with glowing faces.

"I would like to know whether Russell Ralph, the black-mailer whom Bob Blandy met in the Park, visited Norris Gibbs this afternoon," remarked Dick.

"There is no doubt of it."

"I intended to see. This villain must not be allowed to blackmail the broker, for he may carry off money belonging to Lucy."

Just thirty minutes after this conversation a boy who did not look much like Dodger Dick rung the door-bell of the house in —th street, and was admitted on his statement that he had urgent business with Norris Gibbs.

The villain broker was found in his library, and the boy came in for a keen inspection as he crossed the threshold.

"I dropped in to inquire if the five thousand dollar reward still stands," said the youth, looking closely at Gibbs.

The broker started visibly.

"Certainly it does," said he. "But is this your business with me? I can't waste my time on matters of this kind. Besides, I am nearly worried to death with inquisitive callers."

"Are there any black-mailers among them?"

"Scores of them, and some of the most infamous ones that infest the city, too. I don't intend to submit to anything of the kind. There was one here this afternoon."

"I thought —"

"You? What do you know about it, boy?"

"Not very much, perhaps," answered the broker's visitor with a smile. "You did not accede to his demands?"

"Not a penny's worth!" cried Norris Gibbs.

"I am glad of that. Now, Mr. Gibbs, what will you give for the missing papers?"

"Which you haven't got?" laughed the broker. "See here, boy, I deal only with those who have things to sell. When you—"

"Pardon me, Mr. Gibbs, I bring you no merchandise," interrupted the boy. "Lucy Lukens's documents are in safe hands at last—in her own, and all the ill-gotten wealth you have couldn't buy a single one."

Norris Gibbs sunk back and gasped:

"In God's name, who are you?"

"Dodger Dick, the river detective!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE END OF IT ALL.

To say that Norris Gibbs was thunderstruck by this startling revelation, would but feebly express his feelings.

He grew white and red by turns.

"I've heard of you," he cried, with an effort, and then he glanced toward the door in a mute appeal for some one to enter and relieve him of his visitor.

"Probably, Mr. Gibbs," answered Dick with a smile. "I am glad you did not let Russell Ralph the black-mailer bleed you. You would not have served Lucy Lukens a fair trick if you had yielded to the rascal's demands."

Again the broker colored.

"Are you the boy?"

He stopped like a man who catches himself in possession of a tongue too eager by half.

"Go on, Mr. Gibbs," said Dick quietly.

There was no reply.

"I think the game is nearly played out," continued the boy detective.

"What game, sir?"

Norris Gibbs assumed a haughty air.

"The game against the girl. I could refer to no other in your presence. The documents are in the right hands at last, and ere this the true story of the mysterious Gibbs robbery is going into cold type."

"And you are here for the purpose of playing the hand Russell Ralph failed with?"

"Just as you think," smiled Dick, moving almost imperceptibly toward the door. "I believe you offered five thousand dollars for the robbers and the return of the missing documents. Are you still in paying mood?"

There was a cutting taunt in the boy's tone.

"Get out of my house!" roared the broker, rising from his chair.

"Your house, eh?" returned Dick.

"Would it be yours if Lucy Lukens had her own?"

"No insolence! I reckon I still command under this roof."

"And you want me to take my departure?"

"I do, and at once."

"Good day, Mr. Gibbs. Didn't I say at the beginning of this trail that I would not desert it till I had reached the end? I found you insolent, I leave you in the same delightful mood."

For several seconds after Dodger Dick's departure the villain broker sat speechless in his chair.

"Heavens! is all this true?" he exclaimed.

"The papers found, Copeland probably under arrest—the whole scheme exposed?"

Stepping across the room he locked the door and then went to his private desk.

"Played out is it, eh?" he said through his teeth, throwing himself into a chair and jerking the desk open like a madman. "I think I've had dealings enough with Chubb Copeland to know what he will do if arrested."

For thirty minutes Norris Gibbs burned papers of various kinds in the open grate a few feet from the desk. Afterward he left the house well disguised and carrying a small sachel.

"Catch me, catch a fox!" he chuckled.

It was twenty minutes later when a man about to board a train in the Hudson River Depot heard a voice behind him, say:

"That is the man there—the one in brown with the reddish whiskers."

Like a guilty wretch the passenger turned and found himself covered by the steady finger of a boy.

As the hand of an officer fell upon the man's shoulder the sachel dropped from a clutch rendered nerveless by the touch.

Norris Gibbs was in the hands of the law!

"Guilt is generally slow of foot, Mr. Gibbs."

remarked the boy, who had pointed the broker cut to the officer, and Gibbs saw that Dodger Dick had scored another victory.

Already in another part of the city several other arrests had been made.

Chubb Copeland had been taken, through the guidance of Tony Ted, and Bob Blandy, the private secretary and an accomplice, though more of a tool in the hands of the schemers, had also been secured.

Ferdinand Foxcraft and Noxie escaped by visiting their quarters shortly after the boy's departure, and finding the treasury under the floor empty.

When the papers belonging to Lucy Lukens were examined, it was discovered that, despite Norris Gibbs's rascality, an immense fortune still remained for the young girl, and she was in time assisted to possession of it by attorneys who had nothing of Copeland's dishonesty in their make-up.

Norris Gibbs and the villain lawyer went "up the river" for good terms, and they are still serving the State far better than they ever served the people.

While Bob Blandy's youth saved him "by the skin of his teeth," Bessie Bullion did not get off so well, for Tony Ted got revenge for his choking when the police broke up her den, and she went up in the same boat with the broker and his adviser.

"I guess I've lost the five thousand dollar reward, but no matter—Lucy's got her rights, and that is good enough," remarked the Dodger to his double, a few days after everything connected with "the Gibbs case" had been cleaned up.

"Wait and see," was the answer. "I tell you a fellow doesn't know what is going to happen no vadays until it has taken place. Norris Gibbs isn't going to pay any one five thousand dollars for catching him at his meanness, but I've an idea some one else will."

That very afternoon Dodger Dick received an envelope which he tore open and found inside a letter of warm thanks, and another bit of paper which read something like this:

NEW YORK, Oct. 10 188—

"FIRST NATIONAL BANK:—Pay to the order of Richard Sly five thousand dollars."

\$5,000. "LUCY LUKENS."

"I told you so!" exclaimed Tony Ted, bursting into a laugh at Dick's speechless astonishment.

"That's too much. Some of this is yours, Ted!" cried the Dodger.

"Not a dollar. I was paid this morning for my services in the case, and I got a good deal more than I deserved, too. You started in with a determination to scoop in that reward, and I guess you've done it."

"Well, here's news for Mother Sturgeon," and away went the boss boy detective of New York to tell his good luck to his foster-parent.

In time Lucy Lukens became the wife of the lover to whose house she fled after leaving the Gibbs residence, and the pair are living in one of the well-to-do mansions of fashionable New York.

As for Dodger Dick and his shrewd double, they are always ready for an exciting chase.

THE END.

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